Author:
Gildersleeve, Jessica

Title:
Elizabeth Bowen and the Writing of Trauma

Elizabeth Bowen and the Writing of Trauma

By Jessica Gildersleeve

Supervised by Professor Andrew Bennett

University of Bristol, 2009

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts,

Department of English, November 2009

79, 929 words

Abstract

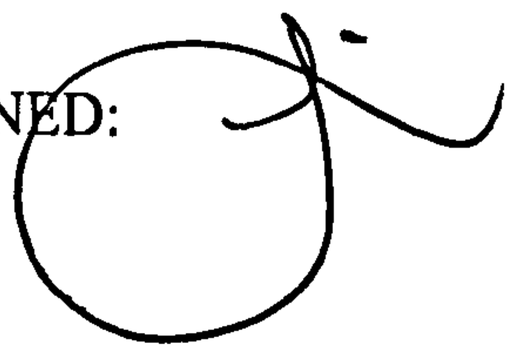
This thesis explores Elizabeth Bowen's fiction as an extension and a disturbance of existing models of trauma theory. It investigates the writing of trauma in Bowen's novels and a selection of her short fiction, with particular emphasis on how such writing elucidates the operation of memory and secrets in literature. This analysis of Bowen's fiction as a representation of trauma finds that her work simultaneously anticipates and complicates deconstructive and psychoanalytic models of trauma, as well as trauma's disruptive properties in reading and writing narrative. While some critics have recognized the significance of memory and the past for Bowen's writing, the ways in which these incorporate and are inflected by ideas about trauma and about narrative have not been explored. By addressing Bowen's work in terms of its relation to trauma theory, this single-author study seeks to fill a gap in existing criticism on Bowen, as well as to develop wider discussion of the nature of trauma in and as literature. Deconstructive and psychoanalytic readings of Bowen's fiction alongside the theoretical material of, in particular, Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Sigmund Freud, reveal the ways in which these novels and short stories think through the psychological, narratological, and linguistic implications of trauma. The project arises at the intersection of Bowen studies, contemporary trauma studies, and critical theory, to propose a new way of reading Bowen's fiction, and further illumination of the writing of trauma. The thesis attempts to shed new light on Bowen's writing as well as on her critical reception, and contributes to the current body of work on trauma theory in narrative.

Dedication & Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my gratitude to all members of the Department of English at the University of Bristol, formal and informal conversations with whom helped to shape the ideas expressed in this thesis. In particular, I am indebted to the guidance of my supervisor, Professor Andrew Bennett, who has had a profound effect on my thinking, research, and teaching. Finally, I could not have undertaken this work without the continued support of my parents, who first taught me to love books.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University of Bristol's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes. The work is original, except where indicated by specific reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: 

DATE: 22·1·10 ·

Table of Contents

Introduction

'We Must Live How We Can'

> I cannot really have felt you were dead, I think, because one doesn't go on talking and talking to any one of *them*: more one goes on hearing what they said, piecing and repiecing it together to try and make out something they had not time to say – possibly even had not had time to know. There still must be something that matters that one has forgotten, forgotten because at the time one did not realize how much it did matter. Yet most of all there is something one has got to forget – that is, if it is to be possible to live. The more wars there are, I suppose, the more we shall learn how to be survivors.[1]

> To live, by definition, is not something one learns. Not from oneself, it is not learned from life, taught by life. Only from the other and by death. In any case from the other at the edge of life.
>
> [...] The time of the 'learning to live,' a time without tutelary present, would amount to this, to which the exordium is leading us: to learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts.[2]

I begin this examination of the writing of trauma with these insistences upon survival, on learning to live, learning how to survive. For it is survival by which the writing of trauma is circumscribed, and to which it testifies, not only in terms of those who live, who remain to be haunted, but in the persistent presence of the dead who demand to be heard. Furthermore, writing itself constitutes a form of survival: a form of bearing witness, of immortalization, and of encryption. In these passages from the work of Elizabeth Bowen and of Jacques Derrida, whose thinking about life and death, trauma and survival, reading and writing, shapes this thesis, emphasis is placed upon learning (how) to live with and live after

---

[1] Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day* (1949; repr. New York: Anchor, 2002), p. 358. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *HD*.

[2] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. xviii.

trauma – on survival itself, as Cathy Caruth suggests, as a crisis.[3] The present study attempts to do justice to the strangeness of Bowen's writing, and to Bowen's assertion that, '[i]n a sense, it is fiction's business to *be* strange', in its concern with the ways in which writing itself lives with, integrates (or fails to integrate), and represents trauma, that psychological wounding caused by an event so extreme that it cannot be immediately assimilated, and is thus, paradoxically, only first experienced in its repetition, and as a function of its forgetting.[4] Seeking to move beyond what Anne Whitehead describes as the 'paradox or contradiction' of trauma narratives – that is, 'if trauma comprises an event or experience which overwhelms the individual and resists language or representation, how then can it be narrativized in fiction?' – this thesis is concerned with the ways in which writing survives trauma and works towards its ethical representation.[5] As in Leigh Gilmore's work on the writing of trauma, this thesis explores language 'asserted as that which can realize trauma even as it is theorized as that which fails in the face of trauma'.[6]

Indeed, a remarkable (and hitherto overlooked) recurrence in Bowen's fiction and non-fiction is an imperative to 'live how one can'; to live, perhaps,

---

[3] Cathy Caruth, 'Introduction' to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 3-12 (p. 9).

[4] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Outrageous Ladies' [1949-63], in *People, Places, Things: Essays by Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. by Allan Hepburn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 379-83 (p. 379). For a discussion of the belatedness and inaccessibility of trauma, see Caruth, who argues that '[t]he historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all' (Introduction to *Trauma*, p. 8).

[5] Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 3. See also Domick LaCapra, who argues that '[w]riting trauma is a metaphor in that writing indicates some distance from trauma (even when the experience of writing is itself intimately bound up with trauma), and there is no such thing as writing trauma itself if only because trauma, while at times related to particular events, cannot be localized in terms of a discrete, dated experience' (*Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Parallax (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 186).

[6] Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 7.

around trauma, around that unknowable, unnameable 'something' which 'one has got to forget – that is, if it is to be possible to live'. In *Friends and Relations* (1931), Bowen's third novel (and a text far too often neglected by critics), this is emphasized by Janet when she insists that 'we must all live *somehow*', and the sentiment is later echoed by her husband Rodney: 'life has really got to be lived somehow'.[7] In Bowen's next novel, *To the North* (1932), Cecilia, 'a little dwarfed' by the death of her husband, is emotionally amnesiac, unable to 'estimate now what she suffered then: the sombre memory went beyond her compass'.[8] After trauma, Cecilia is sensationally impoverished, subject to 'meaner living' (*TN* p. 99). In this novel, that 'somehow' of *Friends and Relations* has been qualified; now, '*one has to live how one can*' (p. 99; emphasis added). This sense of being reduced or 'dwarfed' by trauma reappears a few years later in Bowen's 1936 preface to *The Faber Book of Modern Short Stories*, in which she suggests that it is fiction which might prove a 'compensation' for this kind of 'meaner living': '[t]he retreat from fact that private fantasy offers has been as grateful in life as its variations are fascinating to art. *Man has to live how he can*: overlooked and dwarfed he makes himself his own theatre'.[9] *The Death of the Heart* (1938) may be seen to follow on from *To the North* in the sense that Cecilia's 'frightened heart' which 'repairs itself in small ways' after the loss of her lover becomes the title trauma of the later novel (*TN* p. 99). *The Death of the Heart* repeats the strange phrase in its imperative to 'defend ourselves against that

---

[7] Elizabeth Bowen, *Friends and Relations* (1931; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1943), p. 24, p. 65. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *FR*.

[8] Elizabeth Bowen, *To the North* (1932; repr. London: Vintage, 1999), p. 99. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *TN*.

[9] Elizabeth Bowen, Preface to *The Faber Book of Modern Short Stories* (1936), in *Collected Impressions* (London: Longmans Green, 1950), pp. 38-46 (p. 44); emphasis added. This sense of fantasy as a 'compensation' or 'retreat' is particularly evident, I argue in Chapter Five, in Bowen's wartime short fiction.

terrible memory that is stronger than will. [...] We desert those who desert us; we cannot afford to suffer; *we must live how we can*'.[10] The cost of suffering thus again implies meaner living, as it also does in another of Bowen's essays, in which she writes, in response to the claim that '[o]ne must live in the moment; one must seize what one can!': '[w]hat one can – how much that is precious eludes the too-hurried grasp!'[11] In the postwar essay 'Ireland', living 'how one can' becomes part of the condition of living in a nation of civil unrest: '[i]n whatever country, *one must live how one can*: it may be seen why Ireland lives as she does'.[12] And when the imperative appears again, in *The Heat of the Day* (1949), this kind of meagre survival can mean failing to live up to the expectations of, or to learn to live with, the dead:

> One must not be too much influenced by a dead person! After all, *one can only live how one can*; one generally finds there is only one way one *can* live – and that often must mean disappointing the dead. They had no idea how it would be for us. If they still had to live, who knows that they might not have disappointed themselves? (*HD* p. 96; first emphasis added)

From *The Heat of the Day* on, disappointment taints this iterated obligation, and it ultimately mutates, in Bowen's final novel, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* (1968), into explosive resentment towards the responsibilities that survival entails:

> 'I wonder,' [Henry] said, 'whether, in spite of all I was telling you this morning, you *can* conceive what a state I am in and how chaotic it is. *Feel*? – I refuse to; that would be the last straw! There's too much of everything, yet nothing. Is it the world, or what? Everything's hanging over one. The expectations one's bound to disappoint. The dread of misfiring. The knowing there's something one can't stave off. The Bomb is the least. Look what's got to happen to us if we do live, look at the

---

[10] Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart* (1938; repr. New York: Anchor, 2000), pp. 190-91; emphasis added. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *DH*. This kind of psychological defense in *The Death of the Heart* is the focus of Chapter Four.

[11] Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Art of Respecting Boundaries' (1952), in *People, Places, Things*, pp. 397-400 (p. 399).

[12] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Ireland' (n.d.), Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, Elizabeth Bowen Collection, 6.5, p. 20; emphasis added. All references to this collection hereafter cited as HRHRC.

> results! Living is brutalizing: just look at everybody! We shan't simply toughen, Eva, we shall grossen.'[13]

In *Eva Trout*, survival may no longer be worth the cost, if the 'results' of living 'how one can' mean that one is not living, but rather, in Bowen's strange verbal alignment, 'brutalizing'. Throughout this thesis, I want to think about how such refusal of feeling moves beyond 'toughen[ing]' to a 'grossen[ing]' not just of life, but of narrative language itself: a deepening, enlarging, or monstrification of language that I read as the writing of trauma.[14]

Elizabeth Bowen and the Writing of Trauma works at the intersection of Bowen studies, contemporary trauma studies, and critical theory, to propose a new way of reading Bowen's fiction which might also offer a new understanding of trauma theory. Drawing primarily on the work of Derrida and of Hélène Cixous, as well as that of Julia Kristeva and Sigmund Freud, it provides a deconstructive and psychoanalytic reading of Bowen's novels and a selection of her short fiction in order to rethink the position of her work in relation to literary theory, with particular emphasis on the ways in which this gives rise to an understanding of memory and of secrecy in narrative. Bowen's fiction, this thesis suggests, anticipates and complicates current paradigms of trauma and its textual representation. I argue that Bowen's work constitutes a model of trauma which does not necessarily rely on the translation of authorial experience but rather on the traumatic structures of language itself. As far as I am aware, this has not been previously attempted in literary studies in any exhaustive way, although Dominick LaCapra has suggested that we might read modernism itself as post-traumatic;

---

[13] Elizabeth Bowen, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* (1968; repr. New York: Anchor, 2003), p. 262. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *ET*.

[14] See 'gross, *a.* and *n.*[4]', in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), in *OED Online* <http://dictionary.oed.com> [accessed 22 October 2009].

citing the work of Virginia Woolf, he argues, in a way that approaches my own aims for this thesis, that Woolf's writing 'is in no sense a conventional narrative but one that both traces the effects of trauma and somehow, at least linguistically, tries to come to terms with those effects, so that they will be inscribed and recalled but perhaps reconfigured in ways that make them not entirely disabling'.[15] Thus, although the examination of trauma has become a prevalent point of interest in literary studies, and although much valuable work in this field has been conducted on fiction by, for example, Toni Morrison and Pat Barker, such studies tend to remain concerned with a new historicist project that seeks to contextualize the trauma narrative in terms of personal, cultural or historical traumas, such as the Holocaust, global and civil war, slavery, child abuse, and so on. While it is likely that Bowen's narratives are influenced by her own traumatic experiences – the early death of her mother, the mental instability of her father, and the impact of two World Wars, for example – I think we can do more with her fiction than simply ascribe its traumatization to aspects of the author's life. Similarly, I have chosen not to pursue a historicist interpretation of Bowen's fiction, in part in order to provide an alternative focus on Bowen's work than those already established in existing criticism, but also in order to do justice to her prose on its own terms. It seems to me valuable to think about how trauma operates in Bowen's fiction at the level of language, and of what use such a reading might be in the broader context of trauma studies. Moreover, if I am right

---

[15] LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, p. 180. With regard to Bowen's work in this respect, the closest recent argument to my own is that of Sîan White, who has proposed that Bowen embeds in her language the personal anxieties of her characters, without making such anxieties explicit ('Intimate Aesthetics in Elizabeth Bowen's Irish Novels', presented at *'A mixture of showing off and suspicion, nearly as bad as sex': Rereading Elizabeth Bowen*, University of Sussex, 30 May 2009).

in arguing for a reading of Bowen's work in the context of a new understanding of trauma theory, the radical nature of her writing of trauma would not, I think, gain from being thrown into relief by the work of her contemporaries. Throughout this thesis, I also choose not to distinguish between what LaCapra has identified as 'structural or existential trauma', or what is sometimes termed pre-Oedipal disruption, and 'historical trauma', a response to a specific event, such as war, precisely because, as LaCapra himself recognizes, structural trauma may be seen as a precondition for historical trauma, and it is therefore, I think, not necessarily always useful to make this distinction.[16] It should also be noted that I do not intend to devalue the definition of trauma by using it in this context. Rather, I think a new interpretation of Bowen's fiction which recognizes it as the writing of trauma (whether so-called structural or historical) may help us to understand the ways in which such narratives work. Reading Bowen's fiction as the writing of trauma, I argue in this thesis, opens up the possibility of a model of trauma which traces the 'grossening' of language in her work and seeks to understand the spectral properties of writing itself.

Bowen studies have, particularly within the last decade, burgeoned: in the last two years alone, her previously unpublished and uncollected essays and short stories have been edited by Allan Hepburn (published as *The Bazaar and Other Stories*, and *People, Places, Things: Essays by Elizabeth Bowen* [both 2008]), Victoria Glendinning has edited the correspondence of Bowen and her lover, Charles Ritchie (*Love's Civil War* [2008]), and Bowen's work has been the subject of two international conferences (*Rereading Elizabeth Bowen*, held at the

---

[16] Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 47.

University of Sussex, and *Elizabeth Bowen: Visions and Revisions*, at University College Cork, both in 2009), a special issue of the journal *Modern Fiction Studies* (53.2, 2007), and two new edited collections of essays, Eibhear Walshe's *Elizabeth Bowen* (2009), and Susan Osborn's *Elizabeth Bowen: New Critical Perspectives* (2009). The present study thus forms part of this new wave of criticism which seeks to 'revise' or 'reread' Bowen's work in a new light. This interest in Bowen has, however, taken some years to crest. Until Hermione Lee's influential study of Bowen's life and fiction appeared in 1981, there had been only a few, and notably traditional, book-length studies of her work: a short pamphlet by Jocelyn Brooke was published in 1952, William Heath's *Elizabeth Bowen: An Introduction to Her Novels* in 1961, Allan E. Austin's *Elizabeth Bowen* in 1971 (revised in 1989), and Edwin J. Kenney's *Elizabeth Bowen* in 1975. Each of these studies is restricted, on the whole, to an examination of Bowen's social realism, her 'feminine sensibility', and the tone of the middle-class drawing-room (or 'civilization') which characterizes her work.[17] Glendinning's biography of the author was published in 1977, and remains the only formal study of Bowen's life.[18]

But even after Lee's critical intervention, extended research on Bowen was slow to appear, although individual essays on her work were increasingly

---

[17] See, for example, Jocelyn Brooke, *Elizabeth Bowen*, Bibliographical Series of Supplements to *British Book News*, ed. by T.O. Beachcroft (London: Longmans, Green, 1952), p. 30; and Allan E. Austin, *Elizabeth Bowen*, Twayne's English Authors Series 123, ed. by Sylvia E. Bowman, rev. ed. (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1989), p. 125.

[18] Patricia Craig published a short biographical and semi-critical study in 1986, but as Craig acknowledges her indebtedness to Glendinning's earlier work, it is difficult to recognize it as a new or entirely separate examination of the author's life (*Elizabeth Bowen*, Lives of Modern Women, ed. by Emma Tennant (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 13). Neil Corcoran has recently identified the need for a new biography as 'hugely desirable' (Foreword to *Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. by Eibhear Walshe, Visions and Revisions: Irish Writers in their Time, ed. by Stan Smith (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), pp. xi-xv (p. xi)).

influential – I am thinking, in particular, of Harriet Chessman's 'Women and Language in the Fiction of Elizabeth Bowen' in 1983 and Ann Ashworth's 'But Why Was She Called Portia?' in 1987. Also in 1987, Harold Bloom produced the first edited collection of Bowen criticism – although this was primarily comprised of essays which had previously been published elsewhere – and in 1990, Phyllis Lassner published in the 'Women Writers' series the first explicitly feminist book-length study of Bowen's novels, a work which focuses on Bowen's subversion of traditional female identity. Lassner followed this in 1991 with *Elizabeth Bowen: A Study of the Short Fiction*, in which she argued for a reading of Bowen's stories 'as a response to her dual heritage and to the turbulent and unresolved history of Ireland', and 'as a coherent, creative transformation of the history that chronicles the lives of not only "the survivors" but also the lost'; Lassner's is still the only extended work to deal exclusively with Bowen's short fiction.[19] Heather Bryant Jordan's admirably detailed study, *How Will the Heart Endure*, published in 1992, reads Bowen as primarily a writer of war; Jordan argues that the wars Bowen 'endured became [...] not only abstractions but also emblems of what she detected to be wrong with the world and the century she inhabited'.[20] My own readings of Bowen's wartime writing owe much to Jordan's subtle but exhaustive study.

It was around this time that Bowen's work was increasingly included in broader critical studies of, for example, Irish literary and cultural history – studies of her fiction and non-fiction form a significant part of W.J. McCormack's *Dissolute Characters* (1993), R.F. Foster's *Paddy and Mr Punch* (1993), Declan

---

[19] Phyllis Lassner, *Elizabeth Bowen: A Study of the Short Fiction*, Twayne's Studies in Short Fiction 27, ed. by Gordon Weaver (New York: Twayne, 1991), p. 6.
[20] Heather Bryant Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure: Elizabeth Bowen and the Landscape of War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. x.

Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland* (1996), and Walshe's collection, *Sex, Nation and Dissent in Irish Writing* (1997) – as well as (often women's) writing of the 1930s and 1940s in, for instance, Janet Montefiore's *Men and Women Writers of the 1930s* (1996), Gill Plain's *Women's Fiction of the Second World War* (1996), Heather Ingman's *Women's Fiction Between the Wars* (1998), Maroula Joannou's collection *Women Writers of the 1930s* (1999), and Patrick J. Quinn's collection *Recharting the Thirties* (1996). And it was also in this decade that more radical interpretations of Bowen's work were produced: Renée C. Hoogland's study, part of a series on 'Lesbian Life and Literature', presents extraordinarily detailed readings of *The Last September* (1929), *The Heat of the Day*, and *Eva Trout*, and seeks to situate Bowen as 'a truly radical, innovative, and critically practicing feminist' by reading her work in terms of 'female sexual identity [...] in relation to discourse and to symbolic agency'.[21] While the rigidity of Hoogland's hermeneutic framework at times produces somewhat narrow interpretations cluttered by theoretical jargon, her work is valuable in its attempt to lift Bowen studies from the torpor of traditionalism. Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle's brilliant and radical 1995 study, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, has been influential not only for the present thesis, but for poststructuralist interpretations of Bowen's work as a whole. Bennett and Royle propose a reading of Bowen's novels which will not only '[draw] together the various and strange interweavings of life and death in writing', but will 'effect a deconstruction of everything that is seemingly most conventional and reassuring about the very

---

[21] Renée C. Hoogland, *Elizabeth Bowen: A Reputation in Writing*, The Cutting Edge: Lesbian Life and Literature, ed. by Karla Jay (New York: New York University Press, 1994), p. 20, p. 22.

notion of the novel'.[22] An attempt to counter this new radicalization was represented by John Coates' explicit argument against theoretical readings of Bowen (those of Lassner, Hoogland, and Bennett and Royle) in *Social Discontinuity in the Novels of Elizabeth Bowen* (1998), in which he seeks to establish the author's 'social and moral conservatism'.[23] That study includes one of the few extended evaluations of *Friends and Relations* in Bowen scholarship: a subtle reading of the novel which traces its atmosphere of containment and disorder in terms of its Austenian influences.[24] Yet on the whole Coates' work seems to me to rely on an assumption of Bowen's didacticism, as well as on shallow, thematic readings of the novels which do little justice to what these texts actually do, and it has, therefore, had minimal influence on the field.

In 1999 Lee published a revised edition of her earlier work on Bowen, which she now began with the assertion, 'Elizabeth Bowen is one of the greatest writers of fiction in this language and in this century', thus again marking the beginning of a new wave of criticism.[25] In the decade since Lee's second intervention, Bowen's work has become more prominent in studies of twentieth-century literature. Readings of her work are now included in collections which deal with feminist and lesbian perspectives and women's writing; literature of war, and of the twentieth century; work on psychoanalysis, on modernist and postmodernist perspectives, and on the contemporary novel and short story in England and Ireland; Gothic, middlebrow, and realist traditions; and English,

---

[22] Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel: Still Lives* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. xvi, p. xviii.
[23] John Coates, *Social Discontinuity in the Novels of Elizabeth Bowen: The Conservative Quest*, Studies in British Literature 38 (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1998), p. 4.
[24] Ibid., pp. 49-52.
[25] Hermione Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, rev. ed. (London: Vintage, 1999), p. 1.

Irish, and Anglo-Irish literary and cultural history. Along with particularly valuable essays by, for example, Clare Hanson, Victoria Stewart, Julia Briggs Raphael Ingelbien, and Jacqueline Rose, several new books on her work have been published. Lis Christensen's 2001 study of Bowen's last four novels 'plead[s] for greater interest in this late body of work', and argues that Bowen's treatment of particular themes (such as identity and time) reaches its climax in the later fiction.[26] That study makes some important points about Bowen's fiction, even if it does tend to read like a catalogue of themes, items, and events. Neil Corcoran's 2004 work, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Enforced Return*, makes a compelling case for the need to attend to, in particular, the historicized presence of nationality, childhood, and war in Bowen's fiction, as well as its emphasis on the importance of writing and language; his assertion that it is '[t]he "vibrating force" of her language [which] is the force which precedes everything else in her; and it is, before everything else, why she is worth our attention', is similarly stressed in the present study.[27]

But it is Maud Ellmann's powerful psychoanalytic study, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow Across the Page* (2003) which has, I think, had the greatest impact on Bowen studies in the last decade. Ellmann is particularly interested in the patterns of desire present in Bowen's fiction, in those '[s]hadowy thirds, fourths, and fifths [which] pop up repeatedly in Bowen's writing', and she also argues that

---

[26] Lis Christensen, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Later Fiction* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2001), p. 12.
[27] Neil Corcoran, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Enforced Return* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 4, pp. 13-14.

> Bowen's works require close analysis of plot, for their meaning cannot be abstracted from the actions by which it is performed, or from the objects in which it is encrypted. Her stories rarely unfold chronologically, but tend to psychoanalyse themselves, tracing present crises to past causes. Meanwhile her syntax – with its double negatives, inversions, and obliquities; its attribution of the passive mood to human agents, and of the active mood to lifeless objects – constantly ambushes our ontological security.[28]

Ellmann's work been particularly influential for the present study, and insofar as she acknowledges the influence of Bennett and Royle's work on her own, the present thesis may be seen to continue in this thread of Bowen scholarship that, as Ellmann puts it, makes 'use of the psychoanalytic and deconstructive methods that her writing so uncannily premeditates'.[29] In the context of Bowen's increasing relevance for our understanding of twentieth-century literature and culture, this thesis seeks to fill a gap in existing criticism on Bowen by thinking through the psychological, narratological, and linguistic implications of trauma in her fiction. Moreover, while some critics have recognized the significance of memory and the past for Bowen's writing, the ways in which these incorporate and are inflected by ideas about trauma and about narrative have not been explored. By addressing Bowen's work in terms of its relation to trauma theory, this study aims to develop wider discussion of the nature of trauma, memory, and secrecy in literature.

The field of trauma studies has, like Bowen criticism, been subject to an explosion of interest, in particular since the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) decision in 1980 to include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III-R). Primarily influenced by Freud's work in, especially, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920)

---

[28] Maud Ellmann, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow Across the Page* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 7, p. 23.
[29] Ibid., p. 17.

and *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), as well as Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's radical rereadings of Freud in *The Shell and the Kernel* (1972) and *The Wolf Man's Magic Word* (1976), contemporary trauma studies (particularly in the context of Holocaust studies, which dominate the field) seek to elucidate the ways in which, as Roger Luckhurst has noted, 'psychoanalysis and literature are particularly privileged forms of writing' that are able to attend to trauma's 'perplexing paradoxes'.[30] Indeed, it seems as if the study of memory has been subsumed by the study of trauma, as increasingly, recognize Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, 'memory worth talking about – worth remembering – is memory of trauma'.[31] In this context, Caruth has emerged as the most powerful critical voice in contemporary trauma studies; her work in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and, in particular, in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) (a work heavily indebted to Freud), remains the shaping force for studies of trauma in literary criticism; the latter is one of the primary influences on this thesis. For Caruth, it is the very belatedness of its experience which characterizes the traumatic event. As she recognizes, 'trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on'.[32] It is in this sense of trauma as exceeding experience, as an event which one 'had not had time to know', to recall my epigraph from *The Heat of the Day*, that Caruth's thinking

---

[30] Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 5.
[31] Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, 'Forecasting Memory', in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, ed. by Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. xi-xxxviii (p. xii).
[32] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 4.

about trauma is most important for the present study and for an analysis of Bowen's fiction, precisely because Caruth's understanding of trauma has affinities with Bowen's. (Indeed, a skill by which Bowen 'remained impressed', she once stated, was 'people's formidable capacity for silence, for keeping a secret, and not less by their power of acting up, of behaving as though nothing were the matter'.)[33] This is evident, for example, in a draft of her 1952 preface to *The Last September* (none of which remains in, but which in a sense haunts, the final piece):

> I had in my early youth, experience ~~which had been less than half~~ little or less than conscious, little or never registered ~~by or analysed~~ by the mind, ~~at the time of happening~~, and therefore ~~till now remaining, in an indifferent 'somewhere' of my memory, wonderfully unspoiled~~ immune and pure.
>
> [...] [The one who remembers] ~~can but be magnetised~~ back to those scenes ~~and times~~ of his own life most steeped in subjective experience which he did not know of. Sensation accumulates ~~where it is least sought, meaning flows in where we had imagined none, one is drawn by the mysterious hauntedness of a period not understood in its own time~~, retrospectively, where we were blind to any. One is captured by the mysterious the imperious hauntedness of a period not understood in its own time.[34]

It is this 'hauntedness' of the traumatic experience, an event 'not understood in its own time' but stored in memory's 'indifferent "somewhere"' which, I argue in this thesis, conditions Bowen's fiction. Her work is circumscribed, I think, by this sense of 'belatedness', 'hauntedness', 'afterwardsness', or more precisely, 'deferred action' – what Freud terms *Nachträglichkeit*.[35] Time, in Bowen, is never 'so simple as all that', and it is those temporal disruptions and disjunctions that

---

[33] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Elizabeth Bowen and Jocelyn Brooke in Conversation' (broadcast 3 October 1950), HRHRC 2.3, p. 13. It is worth noting the ambiguity of 'acting up' here; that is, of (civilized) behaviour and of (childish) misbehaviour.

[34] Elizabeth Bowen, draft of Preface to *The Last September* (n.d.), HRHRC 7.2, p. 2, p. 5.

[35] Noting that Freud never entirely elucidated this concept, Nicola King provides a useful overview of *Nachträglichkeit* in her work: *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self*, Tendencies: Identities, Texts, Cultures, ed. by Peter Brooker (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 4, p. 11.

characterize traumatic memory to which I attempt to do justice in this study (*HD* p. 283, p. 285, p. 303).

But it is not only memory studies on which trauma theory has had an influence. As Eric L. Santner states, the language of trauma studies has similarly infiltrated 'the semantic field' of critical theory in terms of what he calls a 'rhetoric of mourning' – that is, 'the recurrence, in so many postmodern theoretical discourses, of a metaphorics of loss and impoverishment', and of an appeal in those discourses 'to notions of shattering, rupture, mutilation, fragmentation, to images of fissures, wounds, rifts, gaps, and abysses' – terms which have become synonymous, Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver have observed, with trauma.[36] It is this kind of rhetoric which describes, I think, much of the work of Derrida, Cixous and Kristeva, and it is also for this reason that their theoretical discourses are both anticipated by and find such resonance in Bowen's fiction. Throughout this thesis I draw on writing by these theorists not only in order to elucidate my thinking about Bowen's work as the writing of trauma, but to draw her prose into the lexical framework of this 'rhetoric of mourning'. Rather than simply applying such theory to Bowen's text, this thesis suggests that reading Bowen's fiction alongside deconstructive theory enables further understanding of the intersections between trauma and narrative that seek to move beyond a Freudian elucidation of mourning. Indeed, while the failure to mourn in *The Death of the Heart*, *A World of Love* (1954), and *The Little Girls* (1963), for example, results in atrophy or psychological collapse, the thesis privileges a

---

[36] Eric L. Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 7; and Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver, Introduction to *The Memory of Catastrophe*, ed. by Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 1-18 (p. 9).

reading of trauma in narrative that consequently allows the emergence of a model of trauma theory which, as I earlier noted, seeks to attend not only to an ethics of representation, but to the 'hauntedness', or the traumatization, of language itself.

The thesis is structured roughly chronologically, and each chapter takes as its cue a different way of thinking about the writing of trauma in Bowen's novels and a selection of her short stories. For reasons of space, and because I think that Bowen's writing of trauma reaches its fullest expression in the novels, treatment of her short fiction is, on the whole, limited to brief analyses in the context of the novels. The exception to this is Chapter Five, which is devoted to an extended examination of three of Bowen's wartime short stories in part because these stories, in particular, provide further depth to the understanding of the writing of trauma I offer throughout this thesis, but also because, in line with Jordan's earlier work, it seems to me that a study of trauma in Bowen's fiction must be especially attentive to her wartime writing.

Chapter One, 'Wound', draws on the etymological roots of the term 'trauma' and explores *The Hotel* (1927) and *To the North* in terms of the ways in which these novels are marked, or written over, by trauma. By bringing to bear on these novels Cixous's work on wounds in *Stigmata*, Derrida's analysis of scarred texts in 'Shibboleth', and Kristeva's work on the abject in *Powers of Horror*, this chapter traces the scars, the traumatisms, and the wounds of *To the North* and *The Hotel*, and argues that what we must pay attention to in these novels is not only the physical abyss which yawns before the characters, but that which is present inside them. It suggests that the current of female trauma in these novels

underscores the broader sense of political and cultural trauma during the interwar period.

Chapter Two, 'Supplement', suggests that *The Last September* is a novel structured by thematic, symbolic, and textual supplementarity – by addition, inscription, construction, invasion – but also by absence and emptiness. Focusing on the figure of Danielstown's box-room, this chapter argues that the box-room may be seen to represent the cryptic structure of the memory of trauma, and that this architecture of trauma is offset by Danielstown's 'Other', the horrific ruined mill. Through an exploration of the interactions between the memorial and the ruin, this chapter demonstrates the ways in which the novel deals with architectural metaphors of traumatic memory in order to make clear the temporal indeterminacy of trauma and of Freud's *Angstbereitschaft*, and to develop and disrupt the ways in which we think about traumatic memory in narrative.

The third chapter of this thesis, 'Remains', reads *Friends and Relations* and *The House in Paris* (1935) in terms of Cixous's assertion that '[e]verything we read: remains', in order to show how both texts explore trauma in terms of narrative traces and to propose that the act of reading involves textual and temporal recovery.[37] *The House in Paris* and *Friends and Relations*, I suggest, anticipate and work through Cixous's concept of reading remains in terms of their engagement with trauma and with temporality. In this chapter, I argue that *Friends and Relations* is haunted by the remains of an alternative narrative plot that threatens to disrupt the present, and that in *The House in Paris*, disruption occurs as a result of the illicit reading of textual remains. These novels thus

---

[37] Hélène Cixous, 'Without End, No, State of Drawingness, No, Rather: The Executioner's Taking Off' (1991), trans. by Catherine A.F. MacGillivray, in *Stigmata: Escaping Texts* (1998; repr. London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 25-40 (p. 26).

complicate and extend our understanding of trauma in narrative, as well as of reading itself.

Chapter Four, 'Death Sleep', explores how we might read *The Death of the Heart* as a study of sleep as a psychophysiological response to trauma; an exploration of, in Bowen's words, 'atrophy, not of death so much as of death sleep'.[38] In this novel, I think, 'death sleep' becomes a typically strange and Bowenesque metaphor for anaesthetizing oneself to the past. This chapter argues that *The Death of the Heart* suggests that to allow a part of the self to atrophy, to become numb, to go to sleep, is the only way one can go on living after trauma, so that the novel's concern with sleep, with death, and with dream is tied to the treatment of traumatic memory. Atrophy, in this text, comes to imply an inability to cope with the traumatic event and to integrate it into conscious thought. Drawing on work by Caruth and by Rose, in relation to Freud's work on dreams, sleep, and awakening, this chapter considers the dream-work of *The Death of the Heart* and of Bowen's 1934 short story, 'The Apple Tree', in terms of the ways in which this might contribute to our ideas about the unconscious and the memory of trauma.

Chapter Five, 'Safe', reads 'Summer Night' (1941), 'Sunday Afternoon' (1941), and 'The Happy Autumn Fields' (1944) as literature of survival. This chapter argues that the short stories Bowen wrote during the Second World War explore the ways in which the psyche becomes a site of escape. During wartime, I argue in this chapter, hallucination, or life lived within the unconscious, is not a representation of trauma, terror or sadness, but rather, of protection and safety.

---

[38] Bowen, 'Elizabeth Bowen and Jocelyn Brooke in Conversation', p. 7.

These psychological sites of 'saving' enable the characters of these stories to except themselves, and to be kept safe, from the traumatic reality of war. Each story refuses or overcomes death, consistently privileging survival over annihilation, and the security of the psyche over the danger posed to the body. These stories determine an optimism necessary for survival in a war-torn present, an ideology of safety that resists destruction. In this way, Bowen's wartime short fiction testifies to a refusal of death. Psychic retreat into the safety and, indeed, the safe of one's unconscious in these stories figures the imperative to 'live how one can' – figures the human desire for survival.

Chapter Six, 'Unknown', continues the discussion of Bowen's wartime writing, and argues that in *The Heat of the Day*, it is the unknown, and the effect of the unknown, that the narrative seeks to elucidate and construct. Bowen's novel of wartime London, I argue in this chapter, textualizes trauma and enacts permutations of the wartime known and unknown in what might be seen as a commemoration of the physical and the psychological state of Second World War London. Drawing on Derrida's work on secrecy and trembling in *The Gift of Death*, in this chapter I suggest that *The Heat of the Day* might be seen as a figuration of Bowen's (post-)trauma narratives, and posit that forgetting, the embracing of the unknown, is finally acknowledged as a condition of wartime survival.

A World of Love is read in Chapter Seven, 'Post', as a narrative of purloined letters, a text which opens up ideas about the siting of memory, the ownership and theft of identity and of a text, and about the question of textual privacy. This chapter considers the ways in which the letters of *A World of Love*

disrupt conventional notions of time and space by analysing the novel in terms of Kristeva's essay 'Women's Time', Derrida's motif of *destinerrance*, and the Freudian *Nachträglichkeit*, and exploring how these disruptions might inflect and develop our understanding of the novel's engagement with traumatic memory. The world of love woven by the delays and deferrals of the novel's love letters might be seen to be representative of the alternative space and time, rather than the timelessness, of the memory of trauma.

Chapter Eight, 'Crypt', argues that *The Little Girls* is concerned with a clandestine past and that the novel's formal, thematic, and structural crypts at once protect and display its secrets. It considers how understandings of the crypt as it is thought through in *The Little Girls* and as it has been theorized in contemporary critical theory, are mutually enlightening. Through an engagement with the concepts underpinning cryptomimetic readings, this chapter argues that this novel enables us to deal with several questions surrounding the interaction of literature, trauma and memory. *The Little Girls* complicates and disrupts our thinking about the 'return of the repressed', about responses to trauma, and about the representation of these in literature. The chapter considers the ways in which *The Little Girls* is concerned with the representation of repression and its relation to non-linear temporality and chronology in narrative, as well as how this relates to the promises of the novel's plot. It seeks to elucidate how *The Little Girls* uses the crypt in order to think about surface and depth in narrative, and what, then, this novel might have to say about the nature of reading in Bowen, and about literature, or the ideal literary object, more generally.

The final chapter of this thesis, 'However', focuses on the violent final moments of *Eva Trout*; in its juxtaposition of the heavy, still warmth of Eva's 'dead body' (Bowen's last words, as it were) and of the child, Jeremy, who 'could not stop running on', this final (un)changing scene, this chapter argues, simultaneously forecloses the idea of a future and implies the possibility of endless movement (*ET* p. 302). With emphasis on Derrida's thinking about telepathy and about immortality, this chapter explores the temporal and logical contradictions of *Eva Trout*'s 'misbegotten' 'however' (p. 64). Chapter Nine thus argues that Eva's anacoluthic mishandling of 'however' throughout the novel foreshadows Jeremy's mishandling of the revolver at its conclusion, and that the discontinuities of this syntactical breach anticipate the lies, telepathy, and the memory of trauma in the text. In the changing stills, screens and scenes of *Eva Trout*, then, Bowen not only points up the processes inherent in telepathy, but also in lying, and by extension, in traumatic memory.

A brief conclusion, 'Postscript', draws together the work of the thesis as a whole in the context of Bowen's posthumous novel fragment, 'The Move-In' (1973).

1

Wound:

The Hotel and *To the North*

> Once the wound closes up we speak of it no longer, but we never forget it.[39]
>
> Across the mind's surface – on which a world's apprehension, strain at home and in Europe, were gravely written – the sense of a spoilt summer, so much prettiness wasted, darkly spread like spilt ink. (*TN* p. 177)

The term 'trauma' is derived from the Greek *τραῦμα*, a 'wound'.[40] When we speak of those suffering from trauma, or of a textual representation of trauma, we speak of a psychological wound, the scar or mark of a painful event. 'Traumatisms', stigmata, pierce, sting, and mark character, time, and text so that, as Caruth points out, this 'wound of the mind' figures a 'breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world'.[41] In this chapter, I will trace the wounding of two of Bowen's early novels, *The Hotel* and *To the North*; that is, I will explore the ways in which these two novels are marked, or written over, by trauma, in order to attend, as it were, to the wounds of these texts.

Caruth introduces her work on cultural trauma theory in reference to Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and his reading of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, in which a soldier unwittingly kills his lover, and later wounds her again when he hears her soul, imprisoned in a tree, cry out. For Caruth, Tasso's tale

---

[39] Hélène Cixous, 'What is it O'Clock? Or the Door (We Never Enter)' (1994), trans. by Catherine A.F. MacGillivray, in *Stigmata*, pp. 72-109 (p. 84).
[40] See 'trauma', *OED Online* [accessed 11 November 2009].
[41] Jacques Derrida, Foreword to Cixous, *Stigmata*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz, pp. ix-x (pp. ix-x).

'evocatively represent[s] in Freud's text the way that the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will'.[42] It is only in its repetition, Caruth and Freud both point out, that the traumatic event can be known; the wound, then, is at once the traumatic act which was hidden from conscious thought, and the very means by which it is recalled.

Both *The Hotel* and *To the North*, I suggest, are concerned with this 'wound' or 'breach' of 'time, self, and the world'. The climax of each novel involves a car crash (one wished, the other actually occurs). While in the former text Sydney approaches the abyss of traumatic recognition before stopping short at its edge, in the latter novel, Emmeline propels herself to destruction. Criticism of *To the North* has often addressed this novel as tragedy.[43] What I want to suggest is that Emmeline's final act of self-destruction, and Sydney's desire for the same, is a function of trauma; Emmeline and Sydney, I argue, are characterized by, and act in response to and as a result of, their psychological wounds. By bringing to bear on these novels Cixous's work on wounds in *Stigmata*, Derrida's analysis of scarred texts in 'Shibboleth', and Kristeva's work on the abject in *Powers of Horror*, in this chapter I will trace the scars, the traumatisms, the wounds of *To the North* and *The Hotel*. What we are asked to pay attention to in these novels is not only the physical abyss which yawns before these characters, but that which is present inside them, the voice which cries out from the wound. It is in such

---

[42] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 2.
[43] See, for example, Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 24; Coates, *Social Discontinuity in the Novels of Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 77, p. 97; and Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 71.

'crying-out theme[s] of suffering-horror', as Kristeva terms them, that narrative and narrated identity collapse:

> . . . linearity is shattered, it proceeds by flashes, enigmas, short cuts, incompletion, tangles, and cuts. At a later stage, the unbearable identity of the narrator and of the surroundings that are supposed to sustain him can no longer be *narrated* but *cries out* or is *descried* with maximal stylistic intensity (language of violence, of obscenity, or of a rhetoric that relates the text to poetry). The narrative yields to a *crying-out theme* that, when it tends to coincide with the incandescent states of a boundary-subjectivity that I have called abjection, is the crying-out theme of suffering-horror. In other words, the theme of suffering-horror is the ultimate evidence of such states of abjection within a narrative representation.[44]

The wounded cry of Caruth's and Freud's works thus chime with Kristeva's description of abjection in narrative. In this chapter I will think through the woundedness, the 'suffering-horror' of *The Hotel* and *To the North*, in terms of these connections between trauma and the abject. What I will suggest is that the emptiness which characterizes the descriptions of both Emmeline and Sydney as they hover on the brink of destruction figures the abjection which characterizes 'suffering-horror', that is, the traumatic recognition of the weeping, wounded self.

***

To the North juxtaposes Cecilia and Emmeline Summers, sisters-in-law bound by the late Henry, Cecilia's husband and Emmeline's brother. The pair are reminiscent of the Pinkertons of *The Hotel*, widow and bereaved sister with whom the lost husband and brother perpetually 'mak[es] a third': 'this evening as ever, his mild be-whiskered face, with that expression of awe on it with which fancy is wont to invest the pictured faces of the dead, looked out from a vast scrolled

---

[44] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 141.

frame that overshadowed the silver-stoppered bottles on the dressing-table'.[45] In *To the North*, however, the lost third is not so obviously present; rather than being immortalized and adored, the dead Henry threatens as a site of pain and absence. After Henry's death, Cecilia and Emmeline set up a house together on Oudenarde Road, in St John's Wood (Bowen is uncharacteristically specific regarding this detail), in spite of the disapproval of their shared relation, Lady Waters, who is certain that '[w]omen could not live together, sisters-in-law especially. How much did they speak of Henry, how lively a bond was their loss?' (*TN* p. 13) Yet the novel opens on the happiness and convenience of the women's shared home, a refuge for them both – for Cecilia, from a whirl of social engagements and travel, and for Emmeline, who runs a travel agency, a space distant from the demands of managing her business, its difficult clients, and even more difficult colleagues. By chance, Cecilia meets Mark Linkwater on a train from Milan to London; the romantic relationship which develops between Markie and Emmeline sets in motion the tragic arc of the narrative. The heterosexual romances of both women disrupt their domestic idyll, for Cecilia's eventual decision to marry Julian Tower awakens in Emmeline the recognition that '[h]ouses shared with women are built on sand' (p. 208). Indeed, it appears that the lives and livelihoods of the two women have, as Lady Waters suspected, been built on loss, a precarious foundation that must ultimately give way. Emmeline's discovery of Markie's infidelity shortly after the news of Cecilia's engagement destroys the calm established at the novel's introduction. In its closing scenes, the wounds of the narrative gape: Emmeline drives herself and Markie headlong into annihilation,

---

[45] Elizabeth Bowen, *The Hotel* (1927; repr. London: Penguin, 1987), p. 24. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *TH*. See also Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 99; and Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 27.

while Cecilia and Julian are left in suspense, waiting for Emmeline's impossible return.

Henry Summers' death is the impetus for the novel's action, the wound that winds, as it were, *To the North*.[46] As in *The Hotel*, from the shrine of his frame, in the heart of the house on Oudenarde Road, Henry forms the dead centre of *To the North*, the space of loss to which Cecilia and Emmeline react. Henry, stopped short, caught in a 'fixed [...] half-look that in life was so rare and fleeting', can be read as a figure for stilled or suspended time in this novel (*TN* p. 29). That is, his death comes to represent not only an emotional wounding of Cecilia and Emmeline, but a gash in the very temporality of the narrative, enacting within the text a site of trauma, preserved outside of time and memory. Indeed, it seems to be the suddenness of Henry's death, his sudden stillness, which unnerves and 'disconcert[s]' Cecilia, who is like the 'widowed shepherdess with only the clock to smile at': 'bewildered', incredulous, she does 'not know where to turn' (p. 13, p. 20, p. 29).

Cecilia's restlessness, her yearning for travel, her penchant for strangers and for strangeness, enacts a jittery desire to escape this centre of stillness.[47] Moreover, it is something more than restlessness which Lady Waters identifies as a societal affliction during this period between the two world wars: 'All ages are restless [...]. But *this* age [...] is far more than restless: it is decentralized. From week to week, there is no knowing where anyone is' (*TN* p. 170). For Cecilia, 'decentralization' becomes a refusal of the dead centre, the staring photograph and

---

[46] It is Henry's death which provokes his widow and sister to move 'to the north', to the house in St John's Wood, North London (Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 99).

[47] Cecilia 'loved strangers, strangeness [...]. Dim with her ignorance, lit by her fancy, any stranger went straight to her head' (*TN* p. 8).

the 'coffer of ashes' which memorialize the stilling of her own plot (p. 160). Cecilia's wish to live with her mother in America, for example, is born of this rejection of the past:

> No more summer ghosts, no belated cuckoo deforming all the remembered sweetness of spring in his spoilt cry. In that continent bare of her youth she saw herself as a girl again. He won't come with me, she thought of Henry; we shall forget one another, she thought of Julian. [...] Strangers, the kindly touch of the unforeseen – it was high time she was abroad again. The heart is a little thing and one can coerce it; she would step up the cheerful gangway and go abroad. [...] [S]o one leaves behind one's little coffer of ashes. (pp. 159-60)

Cecilia longs for more than a change of scene: what she wants is to return to a time prior to her marriage, to the shelter of her mother's household, to that spring of her girlhood before she became a Summers. Her escape from the 'little coffer of ashes', and from the 'morgue' of memories at Farraways (which gruesomely 'lay with their faces upturned' [p. 161]), is thus not only a means of distancing herself from this oppressive stillness, archive of death, but to precede it, to cheat the wounding of her expected narrative.

> Here she was at a standstill, her plot only half spun out. [...] It could not always be Henry.
>
> Emmeline knew it was not, still, Henry, but was his death. More shocked by this than she knew, a little dwarfed by the accident, Cecilia could not estimate now what she suffered then: the sombre memory went beyond her compass. Death gone, one rejects the ordeal instantly: grief, great in momentous passing, leaves one a little smaller. Obstinate in its refusal to suffer, the spirit puts up defences; the frightened heart repairs itself in small ways. Very few remain ennobled; one has to live how one can . . . (*TN* p. 99)[48]

It is 'not, still, Henry', which thwarts Cecilia's 'plot', but still Henry, dead Henry, in whom she can yet barely believe, the ghost with whom she lies, and who

---

[48] This important passage is very often overlooked in favour of its succeeding metaphor of the 'great house [...] destroyed by fire' (*TN* p. 99). Lee, for example, suggests that such 'landscapes of dereliction are made to illustrate states of mind' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 76). See also Coates, *Social Discontinuity in the Novels of Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 73; and Vera Kreilkamp, 'Bowen: Ascendancy Modernist', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 12-26 (p. 15).

weighs her down even as she tries to flee. Cecilia's means of survival, then, is to attempt to spurn Henry's death by temporally circumventing its very occurrence, to '[reject] the ordeal' and 'refus[e] to suffer'. Moreover, this passage anticipates *The Death of the Heart*, and that novel's assertion that, '[w]e desert those who desert us; we cannot afford to suffer; we must live how we can' (*DH* p. 191). Cecilia, then, might be seen as a precursor to Anna Quayne, in the later novel; the assertion that '[d]isability seems a hard reward for courage' applies equally to both women, a stilled heart poor compensation for avoiding grief (*TN* p. 100). Later, Cecilia's 'refusal to suffer' is reiterated, for her 'alliance [with Emmeline] remained, on Cecilia's side certainly, largely defensive. Henry's death had been something ravaging, disproportionate; around Oudenarde Road a kind of pale was put up against one kind of emotion: nothing on that scale was to occur again' (p. 148). However, rather than putting into practice the numbness of 'death sleep', as Anna does, Cecilia adopts a frenzied restlessness which denies this dead stillness in her past, and makes certain that 'nothing on that scale [will] occur again'. Cecilia thus rejects a sense of being stopped (by the) dead which, from the novel's opening, it is made clear she dreads: '[a]t Chiasso, they stopped dead, it appeared for ever. [...] As the wait prolonged itself and a kind of dull tension became apparent, she sent one wild comprehensive glance round her fellow travellers, as though less happy than cattle, conscious, they were all going to execution' (p. 5). Finally, cruelly and terribly, Cecilia, who so fears stillness, is condemned to forever await Emmeline in the hallway of their home, suspended in the threshold of the novel, and held on the threshold of advancing her own narrative, caught in the open wound of her sister-in-law's absence. For Cixous, these kinds of

'flight[s] in the face of the intolerable' have a further effect, for in 'fleeing', she argues, 'the flight *saves* the trace of what it flees. This is why they flee: to *maintain* the horror *unforgettable* – the horror we would not live in the present although we want to keep its awful treasure, its proof, its testimony, its transfiguration'.[49] In escaping, one must always refer back to 'the trace' of what is fled, determining, saving and reinscribing this as a centre, an unforgettable but precious wound, even as it is left behind. Cecilia's frantic movement, then, may be read as a physical enactment of the processes of traumatic memory, at once seeking to save and to reject 'the trace' of Henry's death, to preserve it in a stilled space outside of time, even as she works to escape its influence.

The photograph of Henry which 'dominate[s]' Cecilia's mantelpiece makes this clear; but in addition, it points up an important identification of Henry with Emmeline (*TN* p. 29):

> Sometimes – by those queer interchanges when [Cecilia] sat most alone, in the cold widowed solitude of her room – their whole married year seemed annulled; sometimes it seemed they had not been lovers . . . Henry looked at you like Emmeline, but more guardedly, more satirically. You read the same skating quickness of thought, less resolution, more feeling, the same reluctance or inability to engage oneself closely with life on any terms. In spite of an almost fantastic detachment of manner and delicate frame, Henry had shown more vigour and less detachment than Emmeline – had he not married Cecilia? (p. 30)

The eerie slippage to second-person narration in this passage not only emphasizes the unity of the Summers siblings, who possess an affinity exacerbated by their orphanhood – '[t]hey brought themselves up side by side, Henry some years ahead; very much alike, as though the same tree had divided' – but an enforced concordance of the reader with Cecilia (p. 13). Moreover, the instruction '[y]ou

---

[49] Hélène Cixous, 'Preface: On Stigmatexts', trans. by Eric Prenowitz, in *Stigmata*, pp. xi-xvi (p. xi).

read' provides a temporal ambiguity which at once looks back to a time when one could read Henry, and puts into practice an immediacy which brings him back to life, thus functioning like the photograph itself. The final question mark underscores the 'incredulity' which shadows Cecilia's marriage and widowhood; that 'married year' now seems impossible, 'annulled' (p. 13). Indeed, this metaphor of annulment foreshadows Cecilia's wish to circumvent her husband's death, for an annulment enacts an erasure, present here in the ellipses which follow the question of their ever having been lovers; annulment represents a voiding of (legal) memory which enables a return to a state prior to the event.

Emmeline, too, is fatally propelled by her brother's death. However, unlike Cecilia, who flees the stilled heart, Emmeline is rather pulled or magnetized into the vacuum of *To the North*'s dead centre. I suggest that the affinity between Emmeline and her brother (reinforced throughout the narrative), in addition to her orphaned abandonment and subsequent sense of unbelonging, brings about in Emmeline a desire for a dissolution of the self which would unite her with her lost brother. Bennett and Royle have argued that it is the 'desire for death [...] which seems to be embodied by Emmeline, to embody her', and they trace this to 'a desire for the stillness of death', an 'aspiration towards the condition of still life'.[50] However, I propose that it is precisely Emmeline's 'stillness', constituted as a kind of detachment from life, which foreshadows the narrative climax of her death. The conclusion figures the culminating moment of the novel in which Emmeline's psychological detachment is aligned with her

[50] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 27, p. 28.

physical state. In this final act of self-harm, Emmeline unifies the destruction of her physical body with her psychological wounds.

Emmeline's stillness or detachment from life (shared by Henry), could also be read as a means of defence similar to Anna Quayne's 'death sleep' which, in *The Death of the Heart*, provides protection from further wounding. Indeed, at the novel's close, Emmeline's rush for death is figured as a fantasy of escape, 'a healing stillness that had eluded her happy and living', so that she is now 'perplexed by the absence of pain' (*TN* p. 242, p. 244). Suicide might become a way to insure herself against further hurt, after the pain caused by the callous Markie. However, I suggest that it is not solely in response to Markie's infidelity that Emmeline drives herself and him to death – indeed, it is her sense of abandonment after Cecilia announces her engagement which incites in Emmeline the thought that she 'and what was left of Henry must draw in closer' (p. 213). Rather, her affair with Markie only delays her desire for dissolution or 'dematerializ[ation]' and oneness with Henry; the psychic vacancy which Markie has throughout the novel recognized, and feared, in Emmeline is, in these final scenes, made sense of: 'she turned his way, after a moment of silence, that same dilated and musing look of inquiry that, breaking again and again across their intimacy, had made him feel her no more than delayed on a journey elsewhere' (p. 67, p. 243). This, then, rather than the tragic or 'fatal momentum of the narrative' would be the sense of predestination, the impression that 'every door leads to death', to which it is possible Bowen referred when she lamented: '[p]oor Emmeline! [...] It was inevitable' (*TN* p. 185).[51] Emmeline's death 'wouldn't [...]

---

[51] Elizabeth Bowen, cited in Victoria Glendinning, *Elizabeth Bowen: Portrait of a Writer*, Penguin Literary Biographies (1977; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 86.

be very noticeable' because, in a sense, it is 'already as though she did not exist' – her psychic suspension works as a precursor to her physical absence (*TN* p. 175, p. 192). The novel's conclusion thus marks the only point at which Emmeline's physical state mirrors her psychological disintegration. Her death thus allows her alignment (or her reunion) with Henry, as well as the symmetry of her own psychic and physical conditions.

Emmeline's withdrawal from life is made clear throughout the novel; she is described as 'transparent', 'elsewhere', 'like a ghost astray', 'a stranger' (p. 56, pp. 66-67, p. 122, p. 137, p. 148). Most striking, perhaps, is the insistence that she is an 'angel' or 'inhuman' (*TN* p. 120, p. 194, p. 243).[52] Critics often juxtapose these with equally frequent descriptions of Markie as 'reptilian' or demonic, at times condemning Bowen for falling into a trap of metaphorical simplicity (*TN* p. 7, p. 44).[53] However, I suggest that it is possible to read Emmeline's 'angelicness' and inhumanity not, or not only, as representations of innocence or goodness, but as figurations of her proximity to death, her 'inability to engage [...] closely with life on any terms' (*TN* p. 30). Emmeline is, rather, in possession of (or possessed by) 'suspend[ed]' or 'straying faculties', perched in a state of 'suspended crisis' like 'one's last day on earth when fear and all sense of farewell had alike departed and only that very brief transit remained ahead' (p. 49, p. 125, p. 140).

In this way, Emmeline, like Henry, is stilled, a cheat of space and time:

---

[52] See, for example, Lee, who suggests that 'there's some strain felt in the effort to load Emmeline and Markie's relationship with elemental imagery and ominous images of travel' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 68-70). William Heath complains that Emmeline is given the title of 'angel' with an 'almost annoying frequency' ('The Jacobean Melodrama of *To the North*', in *Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), pp. 27-38 (p. 29)).

[53] See, for example, Heath, 'The Jacobean Melodrama of *To the North*', p. 29. I have found no suggestion, however, that one might read Emmeline's 'snake-skin shoes' as a signifier of her fall to the charms and influence of serpentine Markie (*TN* p. 53).

> Her roll-top in its solemn surround of silence was a monument to the pretence of industry: in vain her stenographer's pointed tapping, in vain the clock: place and time, shivered to radiant atoms, were in disorder. There was no afternoon; the sun, forgetting decline, irresponsibly spun like a coin at the height of noonday. Emmeline, as though threatened with levitation, gripped the edge of her roll-top. (p. 118)

Like her property, Emmeline is 'a monument to the pretence of industry', the pretence of life; suspended, 'place and time' become atomized, 'shivered', 'disorder[ed]' – abstracted and meaningless.[54] Indeed, Bennett and Royle see this as more broadly representative of space and time in Bowen, and argue that here, '[w]hat is fragmented or shivered is not only Emmeline's experience or state of mind: it is a shattering or shivering that can be seen to characterize any and every Bowenesque afternoon, or, more precisely, that haunts and thus conditions all "place and time" in Bowen'.[55] This might be seen to underscore the juxtaposition of Emmeline with her clients, so that, as Ellmann notes, 'Emmeline moves by proxy while remaining at a standstill, static as the eye of a tornado'.[56] However, this passage might also suggest that Emmeline is engaged in a performance of normality ('I believe in façade', she claims [*TN* p. 24]), so that, as Heath has noted, her 'dedication to the travel bureau, then, is her attempt to join vicariously in the experience of others, compensating for the psychological retreat she herself has made and for the passivity of her acquaintances'.[57] Under the 'irresponsibl[e]' sun, the afternoon, temporal referent, ceases to have significance, while space is now so irrelevant that Emmeline may at any moment levitate. Moreover, the

---

[54] Ellmann suggests that in *To the North*, 'human beings become mechanical – spinning, twitching, shivering, and stilling, as if driven by remote control' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 110). For Bennett and Royle the novel describes 'the force of [...] going', a 'radiance of atoms' (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 41).

[55] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 31.

[56] Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 103.

[57] Heath, 'The Jacobean Melodrama of *To the North*', p. 28. See also Edwin J. Kenney, *Elizabeth Bowen*, Bucknell University Press – The Irish Writers Series, ed. by James F. Carens (London: Associated University Press, 1975), p. 42.

elements of hallucinatory psychosis in this passage foreshadow the closing moments of the novel, in which Emmeline speeds to her death; her desire for dissolution, for freedom from the pain of survival now at its height, Emmeline is no longer resistant to 'levitation', or the 'total loss of her faculties' (*TN* p. 244). Now, she 'was lost to her own identity, a confining husk', while to Markie, her very 'stillness' figures a 'remoteness that seemed more in time than in space' (p. 242, p. 244). This disregard for, or suspension outside of, temporality, Emmeline elsewhere thinks of as 'air-mindedness' – 'this distended present, this oppressive contraction of space would be properties of air-mindedness' – of the angel or the inhuman (p. 144). It seems that more than resisting or rejecting temporality, Emmeline is unable to assimilate or to comprehend any time beyond the present. In Kristevan terms, this figuration of Emmeline as one for whom 'time has been erased or bloated, absorbed into sorrow' reinforces her woundedness.[58] A state of spatial and temporal suspense thus comes to figure Emmeline's 'retreat of thought' or 'recoil' from life, and her movement towards dematerialization (*TN* p. 194).[59]

Emmeline's psychic detachment is so heightened that even those around her appear to dissolve: she looks at Markie 'as though he were not there', and stares 'so fixedly at Cecilia that Cecilia had disappeared' (*TN* p. 72, p. 98).

---

[58] Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 4. For Bennett and Royle, the 'movement of time' in *To the North* 'cannot be assimilated to the sensible or intelligible, to a commonsense perception of time as a continuous, homogeneous, linear unfolding or narrative' (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 26). Austin argues that at the novel's conclusion, '[d]riving furiously, Emmeline seems determined to eclipse both time and space' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 45). See also Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 67.

[59] Chris Hopkins has noted the confusion regarding selfhood in *To the North*, suggesting that its characters 'worry about the fact that they do not seem to know what makes up their own selves' ('Elizabeth Bowen: Realism, Modernism and Gendered Identity in Her Novels of the 1930s', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 4 (1995), 271-79 (p. 272)). What I read as Emmeline's detachment or suspension from life, Austin interprets as narcissism (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 45).

Moreover, her psychic death so far precedes her physical dissolution that long before the novel's apocalyptic conclusion it is as if, for Cecilia, her sister-in-law does not exist:

> She looked into Emmeline's room, which, with counterpane drawn up over the pillow, looked shrouded, as though no one slept here now. A friend's room with its air of guarding a final secret is like a death-chamber; here, still unknown, the sleeper seems many times to have died. [...]
>
> Though the idea of parting from Emmeline could seem intolerable there was not much more, it occurred to Cecilia, than the idea of company in her company. Saying: 'I live with Emmeline,' she might paint for ignorant eyes, and even dazzle herself for a moment with a tempting picture of intimacy. But she lent herself to a fiction in which she did not believe; for she lived with nobody. (pp. 132-33)

Emmeline is here at once dead, fictional, and nobody, her unreality repeated in simulacra which can only approximate to her estrangement from life. Thus, Emmeline 'seems many times to have died', each attempt to describe her non-existence further emphasizing her detachment. Emmeline, like Henry, is the ghost with whom Cecilia lies. Finally, that Cecilia 'lived with nobody' underscores the fact that of the three Summers, it is now only she who lives: Cecilia 'live[s]', surrounded by 'no body': the dead Henry and the falsely living Emmeline.

Emmeline's myopia also emphasises her psychological detachment. It is as if there is a veil or mist between Emmeline and her environment, a detachment of vision which is not merely symptomatic of her psychological state, but which exacerbates it. Astigmatic Emmeline is thus disabled (in a way similar to both Cecilia and Anna Quayne) from participation in life.[60]

---

[60] Cixous has described myopia as a wound ('Savoir', in *Veils*, by Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. by Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries (1998; repr. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 3-16 (p. 7)). Only Kenney, however, has described Emmeline as suffering from a 'disability' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 42).

> Myopia was her fault, her lead, her imperceptible native veil. Strange: she could see that she could not see, but she could not see clearly. Every day there was refusal, but who could say where the refusal came from: who was refusing, the world, or she? She was part of that obscure surreptitious race who go about in confusion before the great picture of the world, all day long in a position of avowal: I can't see the name of the street, I can't see the face, I can't see the door, I can't see things coming and I'm the one who can't see what I ought to be able to see. She had eyes and she was blind.[61]

For Emmeline, the confusion brought about by physical affliction magnifies her inability to engage with 'the great picture of the world', so that she is 'slow [...] in connecting things with herself' (*TN* p. 181). Importantly, in *Veils*, Cixous traces from the vagueness and uncertainty of the myopic condition a 'mad fatality' or inevitability which not only echoes a reading of the tragic arc of *To the North*, but underscores the suggestion that it is Emmeline's myopic suspension which makes her fall inevitable.[62] Emmeline's myopia enables her to remain detached from the world and provides her with a means of dematerialization Cixous describes as 'self-effacement': '[n]ot seeing she could not see herself seen, that's what had given her her blindwoman's lightness, the great liberty of self-effacement'.[63] Like Sydney in *The Hotel*, Emmeline's 'own visibility is impossible to calculate' (*TH* p. 42). Emmeline's myopia enables her to forget herself, to veil herself, and in this way to move some way towards dissolution (indeed, towards the very transparent properties of the veil): '[w]alking the streets blindly she did not know that she thought, till a knuckle grazed on a wall, a shout as she stepped off into the traffic recalled her from depths whose darkness she had not measured' (*TN* p. 225). Moreover, in the sense that Emmeline 'seldom wore' her spectacles 'from an

---

[61] Cixous, 'Savoir', p. 1.
[62] Ibid., p. 7.
[63] Ibid., p. 12.

independence that would rather blunder than be directed', her 'independence' also constitutes a kind of secession (p. 15).

> Still the room kept for her the ghost of its early strangeness; it would never be quite like other rooms – as though coming in for the first time she had anticipated something upon the threshold. But this touch of strangeness upon her nerves was becoming familiar: an isolation from life she felt here [in Markie's flat] bound her up more closely than life itself. She could not have described the room, told where the clock ticked from, what pictures there were, or whether its colours, shapes, textures, had ever displeased or pleased her. [...] But intense experience interposed like a veil between herself and these objects. When he spoke or approached it was for an instant as though the veil parted: something unknown came through – though he was all the time formless near her like heat or light. His being was written all over her; if he was not, she was not: then they both dissipated and hung in the air. But still something restlessly ate up the air, like a flame burning. (p. 180)

This passage demonstrates the way in which Emmeline's myopic detachment exaggerates her 'isolation from life', and is in turn amplified by Markie and his home. Yet, beyond a practical interpretation of her myopia, the 'intense experience' which 'interpose[s] like a veil' suggests a strain between reality and its encounter with Emmeline, working against Coates' claim that in *To the North*, 'the physical world acts as a guarantee of the existence of individual identity'.[64] This strain is overlaid by a complicated temporality, for it is linked to the 'ghost' of the room's 'early strangeness', at once recalling the past – the first time she had stood on Markie's threshold – and its futurity – the 'anticipat[ion]' she had felt at that time. Thus, again, Emmeline is suspended out of time, this sense of the past and of the future 'interpos[ing]' and isolating her from the present. Like the graze of a knuckle or a shout on the street, Markie (though only 'for an instant'), parts Emmeline's veil; it is only for him that she enters the present. As in my earlier suggestion that Markie merely delays Emmeline's desire for dissolution, without

[64] Coates, *Social Continuity in the Novels of Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 80. See also 'intense, *a*'., in *OED Online* [accessed 6 April 2009].

him, Emmeline ceases to exist (and to take on her suspenseful properties of 'air-mindedness'): 'if he was not, she was not: then they both dissipated and hung in the air'. The chapter returns, at its end, to her yearning for dematerialization, as the restless 'something' which 'ate up the air, like a flame burning', becomes an 'intense' element which devours life-enabling oxygen and thus saps from Emmeline the urge to survive. This, I suggest, is the very same 'something' which 'it was an effort for her to see round or over', which 'take[s] up her whole foreground', and moreover, the same 'something' – the desire for death – which is also present in *The Hotel* (*TN* p. 191).

Emmeline's myopia is also described as a 'mist' or 'cloud' which equally veils others from her, and herself from others, so that she fails to read the signs of Markie's callous potential: 'I never dare think what you do see. Nothing at all like things are', he complains (p. 68, p. 104, p. 184). For example, she (mis)reads the notes Markie writes to her on their flight to Paris as love letters – notes which are, for him, as a lawyer, contracts, his get-out clause: '[*w*]*e could not marry*', he writes, and later, smugly, '[b]ut you knew I was always out for what I could get' (*TN* p. 138, p. 237).[65] 'You are like an insurance company', Emmeline eventually recognizes (*TN* p. 184). But Markie, in turn, misreads Emmeline, and in this way brings about the novel's horrific conclusion. Indeed, his capacity for misinterpretation is anticipated by his first meeting with Cecilia, as he judges her by her (novel's) cover, miscasting her as a woman who wishes 'to impress', when

---

[65] Another instance of Emmeline's misreading of Markie occurs when she is unable to interpret Markie's 'story about beech trees', unclear 'whether he meant people should not marry, or should not live in Buckinghamshire' (*TN* pp. 56-57). Austin points out that her 'lack of perception follows the author's having already established how readily Cecilia sized him up on their first encounter' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 42).

it is rather Markie who marks himself, impresses himself on others (*TN* p. 8).[66] Later, it is partly Markie's determination to see Emmeline as an angel, or as a delicate child, which means that he fails to read the consequences of his betrayal. Indeed, it is Emmeline's very detachment to which Markie is most attracted, it is her very 'strangeness' which 'sweeten[s] possession': '[a] sense of that unknown presence within her outline – a presence that slipped behind veils every time they kissed – made his fingers, jumping and burning with fresh excitement, tighten about her cold tense wrist as she drove' (*TN* p. 185, p. 238). It is he who prefers her to neglect her spectacles, to remain veiled, his angel, suspended beyond an engagement with reality (*TN* p. 104).[67]

Yet, *To the North* does not present Emmeline's condition as unusual. To return to this chapter's epigraph, *To the North* overlays the political with the personal, as the 'world's apprehension' of 'strain' (including the possibility of another war) is 'gravely written' across the collective mind, while Emmeline Summers might herself be understood to be the 'spoilt summer', the 'wasted' 'prettiness' which spreads 'like spilt ink'.[68] Vera Kreilkamp notes that although wartime 'losses' are, in this novel, 'virtually unmentioned', they 'shadow a post-

---

[66] In fact, Cecilia is several times referred to as a novel – she is like 'an engaging new novel certain to entertain'; 'a novel for any subscriber to take out'; and 'her personality was like an engaging book on a shelf by one's chair that one has only to put out a hand for, but does not put out a hand for' – descriptions perhaps underscoring her suitability for traditional narrative plot, yet gone awry (*TN* p. 39, p. 88, p. 133).

[67] Geneviève Brassard takes this a step further when she argues that 'Markie's misogyny and opportunistic sexual morality "mark" him, so to speak, as a typical male of the period who worships female purity but still wants women to be sexually available for his needs' ('Fast and Loose in Interwar London: Mobility and Sexuality in Elizabeth Bowen's *To the North*', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 18.3 (2007), 282-302 (p. 290)).

[68] The metaphor of spilt ink had also been used in *The Hotel*: the framing argument is 'a flare – or a blotting out, how could she better describe it? – like the horrible blackness of spilt ink, suddenly everywhere, that makes one crinkle one's face up' (*TH* p. 8).

war edginess'.[69] In *To the North*, she argues, 'the First World War exists not only as a dislocating break with the past, but as the century's recurring source of the dead, the maimed and ghostly undead'.[70] Later, Bowen's writing during the Second World War makes clear that recurrence – this is a wounding doomed, like Tasso's wounding of Clorinda, to be repeated. In the 1941 short story, 'Tears, Idle Tears', the eyes of the child, Frederick, and of the adult, George, are figured as 'wounds, in the world's surface, through which its inner, terrible unassuageable, necessary sorrow constantly bled away and as constantly welled up'.[71] Almost like a tide, the story suggests, blood and tears will be spilled, over and over. It is possible, I think, to see Emmeline's death-in-livingness as symptomatic of the aftermath of war: she represents the wounding, or the woundedness, of her generation, as one of 'the maimed and ghostly undead'. What I want to suggest, finally, is that this might also be seen to figure a textual wounding, a temporal and psychological gash in the novel (and, indeed, in *The Hotel*).

To the North, like Cixous's *Stigmata*, is a text which bears 'the trace of a wound', and may be seen to transfigure the 'spilling of blood, be it real or translated into a haemorrhage of the soul'.[72] That is, while *To the North* does not explicitly engage with the events or effects of the First World War, it nevertheless 'translate[s]' the physical and psychological wounds of war into the text itself.[73] ('Once the wound closes up we speak of it no longer, but we never forget it.') It could be said that *To the North* is scarred by the almost unacknowledged war. As

---

[69] Kreilkamp, 'Bowen: Ascendancy Modernist', p. 19. See also Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 23; and Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 35.
[70] Kreilkamp, 'Bowen; Ascendancy Modernist', p. 19.
[71] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Tears, Idle Tears' (1941), in *The Collected Stories of Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. by Angus Wilson (London: Vintage, 1999), pp. 479-487 (p. 486).
[72] Cixous, 'On Stigmatexts', p. xi.
[73] The only overt reference to the war in *To the North* documents the reaction of Cecilia's mother to the deaths of her soldier sons (*TN* p. 13).

Derrida has argued of Paul Celan's poetry, this novel 'bears in its body like a memory, like, at times several memories in one, the mark of a provenance, of a place and of a time [...] [and] it begins in the wounding of its date'.[74] *To the North* bears the trace or mark of a particular place and time: the First World War. As Jordan has recognized, in spite of what she sees as its 'sustained influence' upon Bowen's life, the First World War only ever enters her work 'by way of shadows and hints and reproving glances from handsome young men in frames on mantelpieces', and 'remains a steady but saddening fact that lonely women and injured men must acknowledge, whether they wish to or not'.[75] But more than this kind of thematic absent presence, I suggest that that war (and later, World War Two) effects a textual wounding which can be traced throughout Bowen's work, and may be said to constitute her writing of trauma. In the sense that all of Bowen's work occurs in the aftermath of, or indeed during, war, to speak of textual trauma in *To the North* and elsewhere is to speak of the ways in which Bowen's writing is marked by the past and to consider the means by which her narratives bear or reinscribe the wounds of history and memory.

To conclude this reading of *To the North*, I want to think about how the marking or wounding of the novel also describes Emmeline's ruin. That is, although the novel concludes with Emmeline's fatal wounding of herself and of Markie, throughout it has been Markie who marks, who wounds, inscribing or 'writing himself across' Emmeline as 'the author' of her 'extraordinary happiness' (*TN* p. 71).[76] What I want to suggest is that Markie does not scar Emmeline;

---

[74] Jacques Derrida, '*From* Shibboleth: For Paul Celan' (1984), trans. by Joshua Wilner, in *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 370-413 (p. 393).
[75] Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 18.
[76] See also Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, pp. 108-109.

rather, his wounding of her functions like stigmata. Cixous notes the difference between the scar and the stigmata as one of presence and absence:

> . . . *scar adds something*: a visible or invisible fibrous tissue that really or allegorically replaces a loss of substance which is therefore not lost but added to, augmentation of memory by a small mnesic growth. Unlike scar, *stigmata takes away*, removes substance, carves out a place for itself. [...] Stigma stings, pierces, makes holes, separates with pinched marks and in the same movement distinguishes – re-marks – inscribes, writes.[77]

Markie soils Emmeline's reputation, stigmatizing her; her good name is marked by his disrepute. This capacity for Markie to mark or engrave himself upon his 'property' is anticipated from Cecilia's first meeting with him, in her observation that his name is 'in handwriting across the corner of his cigarette case' (*TN* p. 19). Indeed, this is what Lady Waters so fears for Emmeline at the conclusion of the novel, that Markie has 'carve[d] out a place for [him]self' in Emmeline, and has done her 'a good deal of damage' (p. 221). While it may have seemed to Emmeline that Markie was rewriting her narrative plot, he was in fact marking out the certainty or inevitability of the conclusion of, or rather, her exclusion from, the text, for '[t]he person who is properly or figuratively stigmatized has traits of the saint [...] and the outlaw, of the martyr and the condemned. [...] whether good or bad, the stigmatized person is signalled out for *exclusion* and *election*'.[78] Irrevocably stigmatized, Emmeline is marked as an outlaw, unable to be contained within, and subsequently expelled from, the text. '[C]ondemned', she completes her self-destruction, and in this final impact or dissolution, the novel comes closest to representing its unspoken wounds.

***

[77] Cixous, 'On Stigmatexts', pp. xii-xiii.
[78] Ibid., p. xiii.

To the North, I have shown, is in many ways concerned to trace the presence of the unspeakable wound. I want now to turn to an analysis of *The Hotel*, which not only anticipates *To the North*'s concern for the detached or wounded self, but also considers how this kind of trauma moves towards the sublime, that other limit-experience associated with the unpresentable and the unspeakable. Both trauma and the sublime figure 'an experience of the world that is too terrible to fit within the matrix of how we "normally" experience it'.[79] Indeed, LaCapra has noted that the sublime can itself be evoked by trauma, 'by the near-death experience, by coming to the brink of the abyss or of annihilation while escaping death and destruction oneself'.[80] *The Hotel*, I suggest, figures a relationship between trauma and the sublime that can be understood in terms of the Kristevan abject and the woundedness, the 'suffering-horror' which describes Bowen's early work.[81]

Bowen's first novel is often compared to Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915), to the work of E.M. Forster, and of Henry James, and concerns the activities and conversations of guests spending a winter on the Italian Riviera. [82] Sydney Warren, the novel's protagonist (if she can be called that, for she 'does' so little), a 'probable twenty-two' and a medical student, has been sent away on a holiday with her elder cousin Tessa by her relations, who fear that the stress of

---

[79] Frank Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. by Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 334.
[80] LaCapra, *History and Memory*, p. 35. LaCapra here refers to ideas expressed by Immanuel Kant in *The Critique of Judgment* (1790).
[81] I am here concerned with the trauma of what LaCapra calls the 'limit-experience'; Elizabeth Cullingford has more than adequately dealt with the implications of structural trauma and sexuality in *The Hotel* ('"Something Else": Gendering Onliness in Elizabeth Bowen's Early Fiction', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 53.2 (2007), 276-305). For Kristeva, notes Dino Felluga, the abject 'is associated [...] with both fear and *jouissance*' ('Modules on Kristeva: On the Abject', in *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*, 28 November 2003 <http://www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/psychoanalysis/kristevaabject.html> [accessed 8 April 2009]).
[82] See, for example, Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 59; and Corcoran, *The Enforced Return*, p. 4. Coates even excludes *The Hotel* from his study of Bowen's novels because, he states, 'the work is derivative' (*Social Discontinuity in the Novels of Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 7).

Sydney's recent examinations may lead to a 'breakdown' (*TH* p. 11, p. 17). During her stay, Sydney becomes devoted to Mrs Kerr, a widow in her forties – the first of the recurring manipulative elder women in Bowen's fiction.[83] However, the arrival of the clergyman, James Milton, and then of Mrs Kerr's son, Ronald, disrupts the careful routine of the hotel. On her son's arrival, Mrs Kerr drops Sydney and shifts her attention to him; Sydney, shocked by this abandonment, seeks company in Milton and, almost accidentally, becomes engaged to him. The dramatic drive back from a hotel excursion jolts Sydney into what may be called an awakening to, or a recognition of, life, but certainly into the realization that she does not wish to marry Milton. She calls off their engagement, whereupon Milton and Ronald, who no longer 'matter', leave the hotel (*TH* p. 81). The novel concludes where it had started, circling back, through the recollections of Miss Pym and Miss Fitzgerald, to the feud from which it set out. As Ellmann has so neatly pointed out, the entire narrative of *The Hotel* occurs within the wound of the rift opened up by this couple.[84]

Like Emmeline in *To the North*, Sydney suffers from an inability to engage in life, a kind of nothingness of the self. Yet, while Bowen's later heroine is in what seems to be a permanent state of detachment that foreshadows her ultimate death, Sydney, on the other hand, appears to balance on the brink of this kind of impassiveness. Although she is repeatedly described as 'strange', 'remote', 'detach[ed]', 'out of place', 'a little out of time', and although this is underscored by the suggestion that the hotel, site of transience, is a 'doll's house',

---

[83] Specifically, I refer to Lady Naylor in *The Last September*, Lady Waters in *To the North*, Lady Elfrida in *Friends and Relations*, Mme Fisher in *The House in Paris*, and Antonia in *A World of Love*, as well as numerous others in Bowen's short fiction.
[84] Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 74.

there is, in this novel, an uncertainty regarding the degree of Sydney's estrangement (*TH* p. 20, p. 27, p. 29, p. 31, p. 60, p. 62, p. 68, p. 82, p. 141). That is, while Emmeline enforces her own detachment, certain that 'no one could [locate] me, and no one seems to expect me to do it for them', Sydney makes her existence dependent on others – and in particular, Mrs Kerr (*TN* p. 192):

> If she did not exist for Mrs Kerr as a tennis player, in this most ordinary, popular of her aspects, had she reason to feel she existed at all? It became no longer a question of – What did Mrs Kerr think of her? – but rather – Did Mrs Kerr ever think of her? The possibility of not being kept in mind seemed to Sydney at that moment a kind of extinction. (*TH* p. 14)

It is this sense of being cast out, or expelled from Mrs Kerr, 'of not being kept in mind', which impels in Sydney the sense of 'a kind of extinction' – a state more permanent, more absolute, than death, suggesting a complete erasure of life, and the impossibility of return. What is so horrific in this passage is Sydney's traumatic recognition that her self appears at once present – in the betrayal of her self-centredness, a hyper self-awareness – and obliterated: it is not, in fact, Mrs Kerr who consigns her to 'extinction', but Sydney who thinks herself into non-entity, into the very impossibility of thought.[85] 'One's own visibility', the narrator of *The Hotel* observes, anticipating the tragic myopia of Emmeline in *To the North*, 'is impossible to calculate' (*TH* p. 42). This is complicated, however, by Sydney's additional uncertainty about the reality or existence of others, those others in whom she places the perception of her own existence: '[s]he was accustomed to stare at people as from a point of vantage, forgetting she too had a face. They had thoughts, too (with these she often forgot to credit them); did *they* also think as they looked at oneself?' (p. 17) Identity, for Sydney, is always

---

[85] 'Rather than thinking themselves', suggest Bennett and Royle, 'people in Bowen are [...] *being thought*' (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 9).

already held in suspense, on the threshold, on the brink, foreshadowing the novel's climactic drive on the edge of the abyss. Thus, Sydney is at once existent and non-existent, a figure of abjection. She is simultaneously the abject thing of horror and caught in terrified reaction to this traumatic collapse of her identity, the breakdown in meaning the abject represents.

Sydney's engagement to Milton may be seen to arise from a desire to escape this abjection. That is, it is only after conversations with other women in the hotel and in particular with Veronica, another young guest, in which her friend wonders, '[d]oes it ever occur to you that being alive is a mistake?' and demands '[b]ut what am *I* to do? I don't want to *be* anything [...]. Tell me what you think will become of me', that Sydney accepts Milton's proposal (p. 97, p. 99). Indeed, it might be seen that Veronica alerts Sydney to the idea that the female condition of 'being' is impossible without adhering to the traditional narrative plot of marriage: '[e]verybody's the same and I must have somebody' (*TH* p. 99).[86] Sydney also overhears a circle of married women, one of whom observes:

> 'As winter comes on with those long evenings one begins to feel hardly human, sitting evening after evening in an empty room. [...] If I shut my drawing-room door, I begin to feel restless at once; it feels so unnatural shutting oneself in with nobody. [...] It's not, of course, that I'm nervous, but I really begin to feel – if you'll understand my saying anything so extraordinary – as if I didn't exist. If somebody does come to the door or the telephone does ring, I'm almost surprised to find I'm still there. One would go mad if one were not able to get abroad.'
>
> She looked round with a shiver of retrospection at the semi-circle which was her pleasant asylum. [...] What they had all escaped was terrible. (*TH* pp. 53-54)

---

[86] Andrew Bennett has observed that Bowen's 'early novels are focused unerringly on young women and concern their post-war resistance to the teleology of the marriage plot [...] and the related concern that romantic love is no longer possible or viable, or the solution to the condition of being a woman, is the fundamental crisis of Bowen's early, Modernist fiction' ('Bowen and Modernism: The Early Novels', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 27-39 (pp. 29-30)). See also Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, pp. 39-40.

It is through one's relationship with others, Sydney learns from the other women at the hotel, that one overcomes this nothingness of the self, 'sitting evening after evening' in an empty room. Yet implicit here is that the abyss from which these women have only just 'escaped' is not just a routine at home, but something worse: the permanent nonexistence of the unmarried woman. It is possible, then, that Sydney sees Milton as a ('business-like' [p. 126]) solution to her abjection: her engagement will place her in a position of certainty, and give her an existence in relation to another, an identity within society. The novel's climactic 'death drive', however, jolts Sydney into a recognition of her existence without these dependencies, so that this moment of trauma works simultaneously as a moment of sublime release.

The experiences of trauma and of the sublime, Frank Ankersmit has noted, are both characterized by dissociation, and provoke this kind of detachment as a coping mechanism:

> The subject of a traumatic experience is peculiarly numbed by it; he is, so to speak, put at a distance from what caused it. The traumatic experience is dissociated from one's 'normal' experience of the world. [...] [In the tranquil experience of the sublime] we have distanced ourselves from a situation of *real* danger – and in this way, we have *dissociated* ourselves from the object of experience. The sublime thus provokes a movement of derealization by which reality is robbed of its threatening potentialities.[87]

Dominick LaCapra, too, notes that the connection between trauma and the sublime involves three components: 'a rupture or blockage of some sort (for example, of understanding); a flooding of the system or potentially traumatizing excess (for example, of anxiety, terror [...]); and elation (for example, at surviving the risk of rupture and excess)'.[88] Sydney exhibits all of these during the

---

[87] Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience*, pp. 335-36.
[88] LaCapra, *History and Memory*, pp. 33-34.

treacherous drive of the novel's climax: not only is her relationship with Mrs Kerr definitively ruptured immediately preceding the drive, she appears to suffer a 'blockage' in terms of her inability to think or to imagine a future with Milton ('[s]uch a little slip of a thing . . . I don't think she *understands*', Mrs Lee-Mittison had already observed of the engagement [*TH* p. 124]).[89] The 'violent' and terrifying excess of the drive down the mountain, a drive 'not like motoring at all', but 'more like *dropping*', might be seen as a moment of abject trauma that reveals the ever-present possibility of death (*TH* p. 156, p. 157). This then gives way, in Sydney, to an intense sense of clarity.

> She sat back quietly and began to concentrate her whole will and imagination. 'If it could be the next corner,' she thought, 'we should go over clean – there is that clear drop. Let it be the next corner . . .' But the next corner was past. The rush of air and the movement had made her come alive again and she seemed to herself to be reasoning very clearly and accurately.
>
> [...] Her mind became quite quiet again and she went on saying. 'The next corner . . . the *next* corner.'
>
> Round the next, barely round it, the brakes jarred, the car swayed on locked wheels and stopped dead. (p. 157)

The detachment demonstrated by Sydney throughout the novel is here at the height of derealization or the refusal of danger, as she 'began to be perfectly sure of what was coming, perfectly confident' (p. 157). At this simultaneous moment of trauma and of the sublime, the abjection of fear and of *jouissance*, Sydney suddenly 'come[s] alive again', and (in metaphors which conjure this combination of the knowledge of death and exhilaration of life), 'for the first time felt life sharply, life as keen as death to bite upon the consciousness, pressed inexorably

---

[89] Ellmann recognizes that 'Sydney, who suffers from "a strange anaesthesia", could be seen as a living embodiment of impasse, blocked from without and from within' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 71).

upon her, held to her throat like a knife' (*TH* p. 157, p. 158).[90] It is at this point that Sydney moves from being 'as inanimate and objective as a young girl in a story told by a man, incapable of a thought or a feeling that was not attributed to her, with no personality of her own', to being a woman in her own story (*TH* p. 156). Sydney becomes the author and protagonist of her own narrative, but more significantly, perhaps, what occurs here is that the trauma or disruption of the male plot makes way for the sublime, the *jouissance*, of female narrative. The way in which the sublime enables this 'non-decision', and allows the novel to 'resist the narrative of romantic love', in Andrew Bennett's words, might then go some way to answering Ellman's question: '[a]nd how can the novel, which traditionally ends in death or marriage, accommodate itself to women's new and unpredictable trajectories?'[91] This 'new and unpredictable' trajectory is made literal in *The Hotel* in Sydney's 'death drive', for it is at the point at which Sydney wishes for, and hovers on the brink of, destruction, the moment which figures a traumatic recognition of the wounded self, that the expected female narrative trajectory is disrupted. The experience of the sublime thus removes Sydney from suspension and from dependent identity; in 'the shock of being alive', the realization that 'we were as real as this', Sydney is no longer a marionette, or a character in another's plot (*TH* p. 160). As in no other Bowen novel, in *The Hotel*, the experience of trauma does not wound but, in its overlap with the sublime, functions as a restorative.

---

[90] Ellmann and Lee both use metaphors of sleep and waking to describe the change in Sydney (Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 76; and Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 59).
[91] Bennett, 'Bowen and Modernism', p. 27, p. 32; and Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 70.

Both *The Hotel* and *To the North*, I have shown, reach their climax during the 'death drive' and Emmeline and Sydney's moments of traumatic recognition or assimilation. While in *To the North*, Emmeline's death might be read as a physical enactment of her psychological wound, in the earlier novel, the traumatic climax overlaps with the experience of the sublime, and enables Sydney's movement away from uncertainty and abjection, and towards a firmer sense of 'aliveness'. Importantly, both novels also link this moment of trauma to a disruption of traditional female narrative plot, and not only for the young women, Sydney, Emmeline, and Cecilia. Indeed, I would like to suggest that Mrs Lee-Mittison's reverie constitutes a further layer of textual wounding in *The Hotel*; a fragmented flash into the trauma or confusion of a female future, the desire for the 'bliss' of independence, of possessing rather than being possessed, of an 'oasis of solitude', becomes unimaginable, even terrifying:

> Surprised at herself, she sat with bliss in her little oasis of solitude. She looked down the slope beside her into the valley below and saw a little house [...] [T]his little house which she seemed at once to inhabit gave her the most strange sensation of dignity and of peace. She saw herself go climbing up the garden from terrace to terrace, calling the goat, and the goat, beautiful in its possessedness, came loping down to meet her, asking to be milked. At this she paused in perplexity, for she had never milked anything and turned cold at the thought of touching the udders of an animal. But in a moment this was over and she carried the milk frothing warm in the pottery jug inside, into the dark interior of the house which would not be dark from within. Here something turned her back and she could not follow herself; she saddened, feeling excluded from some very intimate experience. The house was lonely and in autumn, when the river was brimming, the rushing past of the water must be terrifying [...] [T]he thud of a falling lemon would be enough to wake one in terror.
>
> The villino suddenly dropped away from her eye as though she had put down a telescope, and as her life sprang back into focus she must have been dizzy, for she felt sick at the thought of their hotel bedrooms that stretched, only interspersed with the spare-rooms of friends, in unbroken succession before and behind her. (pp. 36-37)

Significantly, Mrs Lee-Mittison cannot cross the threshold of her fantasy, a liminal site which here moves from sublime pastoral bliss to those traumatic and repetitive 'thud[s]' of terror. It is then with dizziness, a sense of vertigo – perched, like Sydney, on the brink of the abyss – that she returns to reality, to dependence, to uncertain rootlessness, to the disappointment of the expected narrative of marriage, anticipating, in fact, the life of the Montmorencys in Bowen's next novel, *The Last September*. In Bowen's early fiction, then, this current of personal, specifically female, trauma, gains importance through its juxtaposition with, and underscoring of, the broader political and cultural trauma of the interwar period.

2

Supplement:

The Last September

> But the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*; if it fills, it is as one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. Compensatory [*suppléant*] and vicarious, the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance which *takes-(the)-place* [*tient-lieu*]. As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness. Somewhere, something can be filled up of *itself*, can accomplish itself, only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy. The sign is always the supplement of the thing itself.[92]

> Meanwhile Lois was very melancholy in the box-room. [...] On the whitewash, her mother, to whom also the box-room had been familiar, had written L.N., L.N., and left an insulting drawing of somebody, probably Hugo. She had scrawled with passion; she had never been able to draw. Lois looked and strained after feeling, but felt nothing.[93]

The Last September is a novel of, a novel structured by, the supplement – by addition, inscription, construction, invasion. But more than this, the supplement is underpinned, in this novel, by 'the mark of an emptiness', the absent thing 'filled through sign and proxy'. Indeed, it is as if the narrative (the sign) is shadowed or haunted by that for which it is supplement, 'the thing itself'. Lassner and Corcoran, most notably, have recognized the 'lack' which describes Bowen's

---

[92] Jacques Derrida, '... That Dangerous Supplement .'.. (1967), trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1976) in *Acts of Literature*, pp. 76-109 (p. 83).
[93] Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September* (1929; repr. New York: Anchor Books, 2000), p. 192. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *LS*.

second novel.[94] In this chapter I want to explore the ways in which this kind of absence is bound up with the spatial (and, indeed, temporal) structures of *The Last September*. Specifically, this chapter will explore the ways in which these ideas about lack and supplementarity might inform a reading of trauma inscribed on, and inscribed in, space: the ruined mill and Danielstown's box-room. I suggest that the architecture of Danielstown mimics the architecture of the traumatized psyche in which trauma, in Freud's terms, is repressed, and according to Abraham and Torok, is encrypted or entombed, in the psychological topography.[95] The box-room, in which the long-dead Laura Naylor is memorialized by the inscriptions she has left on its walls, may be seen to figure the absent presence – the lack and the supplement – of traumatic memory. Drawing on Douwe Draaisma's assertion that writing and the storehouse are both established metaphors for memory, in this chapter I will consider how these textual remains work to memorialize – indeed, to immortalize – Laura.[96] The absent Laura is made present, I will argue, by these scrawls, for the sign and the memorial work in similar ways to supplement a lack, to '*take-(the)-place*', to hold the place of, 'the thing itself'. This reading of an architecture of trauma in *The Last September* is elaborated by an examination of Danielstown's 'Other', the horrific ruined mill.[97] This chapter argues that the

---

[94] Phyllis Lassner, 'The Past Is a Burning Pattern: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', *Eire-Ireland*, 21.1 (1986), 40-54 (p. 43); and Neil Corcoran, 'Discovery of a Lack: History and Ellipsis in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', *Irish University Review*, 31.2 (2001), 315-33 (p. 315).

[95] See Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. by Anna Freud, trans. by James Strachey, pp. 218-68 (p. 223, p. 228); and Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, 'The Topography of Reality: Sketching a Metapsychology of Secrets' (1971), in *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), I, pp. 157-61 (p. 159).

[96] Douwe Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas About the Mind*, trans. by Paul Vincent (1995; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 27.

[97] Corcoran has similarly argued that the mill is Danielstown's dark Other ('Discovery of a Lack', p. 329), while Ellmann asserts that in Bowen's work, 'architecture takes the place of psychology' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 42).

abjection of the ruin, which at once figures the maintenance and the disruption of spatial and temporal continuity, works as a site of trauma in the narrative, in the landscape, and in the novel's sense of an Anglo-Irish heritage.

Much like Bowen's first novel, *The Hotel*, *The Last September* is concerned with the difficulties of adolescent female identity. However, as critics have argued, in the later novel the uncertainties of nineteen-year-old Lois Farquar are more clearly tied to those of post-First World War Europe, and in particular, of Ireland and the Anglo-Irish during the Troubles.[98] The 'threshold' existence, as it were, of the adolescent girl becomes a figure, in this novel, for national and international political uncertainty in 1920s Ireland. *The Last September* is the first of Bowen's novels to adopt what will become a familiar tripartite structure, and the subtitles of the three sections – 'The Arrival of the Montmorencys', 'The Visit of Miss Norton', and 'The Departure of Gerald' – pick up on the hospitality intrinsic to the Big House.[99] The novel's first section works to reinforce the established way of life of the Anglo-Irish gentry – the daily visits, tennis parties, and scheduled lunches which demarcate the regularity and routine of Danielstown, and households like it. There is, nevertheless, an underlying sense of unease about the political turmoil in the region. Upon their arrival, for example, the Montmorencys are immediately asked if there had been 'trouble' on their journey, though this is just as quickly covered by questions about tea (*LS* p. 4). That insidious disquiet foreshadows the more explicit violence of the novel's

---

[98] See Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 48; Kenney, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 33; Lassner, 'The Past is a Burning Pattern', p. 48; and Heather Ingman, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women: Nation and Gender* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 32-33.

[99] Bowen considered the '"traditional" characteristics of Big House culture' to be 'hospitality' and 'sociability' (Paul Delaney, '"Acts of Remembrance": History, Anxiety and Elizabeth Bowen', *Etudes Irlandaises*, 31.1 (2006), 87-103 (p. 101)).

concluding scenes. But it is Lois's self-conscious desire for romantic love which is foregrounded, and which is, at this stage, focused on the much older Hugo Montmorency, whom she recalls having visited her mother (to whom he was once engaged) several years previously. This infatuation is disrupted, however, by the arrival of Marda Norton in the novel's second section. Marda exemplifies a modern femininity to which Lois aspires; but more than this, there is a sense in which her passion for Marda approaches homosexual desire. It is after Lois and Marda's most intimate encounter – their visit to the ruined mill and discovery there of an Irish rebel – that Lois decides upon the 'safety' of marriage to Gerald Lesworth, a young British lieutenant.[100] The novel's third section links the personal and political plots as the growing violence across the countryside enters the domestic realm. And it is in this final section that Gerald does, in effect, 'depart' twice over: Lois and Gerald's engagement is swiftly dissolved by the disapproving Lady Naylor, and shortly after that, Gerald is killed while on patrol. Lois, too, has left Danielstown prior to the novel's apocalyptic conclusion. It might be seen that her going away repeats Laura's earlier departure from the Big House or, perhaps, that Laura's departure anticipates her daughter's. Laura's never-told narrative, I suggest, forms a traumatic absence which Lois's plot supplements; Lois is the supplement for Laura, shadowed by, and (in) the shadow of, the lost mother.

The temporal structures of *The Last September* complicate this condition of anticipation or, more specifically, anxiety (the anticipation of trauma) in the narrative. Jed Esty, for example, notes that the Anglo-Irish of *The Last September*

---

[100] The sexualized implications of this visit have been noted by, for example, Ellmann (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 65).

are 'an extinction waiting to happen', and points out that the 'odd temporality of anticipated doom in the novel's 1920 setting – combined with the retrospective foreclosure of its 1928-9 date of composition' is mirrored by Lois, 'the living figure of a cultural death'.[101] *The Last September*, Bowen later wrote, was the only one of her novels 'to be set back deliberately, in a former time. [...] "All this," I willed the reader to know, "is done with and over." From the start, the reader must look, be conscious of looking, backward – down a backward perspective of eight years'.[102] This 'backward perspective' means that the personal and the political plots of *The Last September* anticipate traumas that have always already happened. Thus Francie has 'very strongly a sense of return' since Danielstown is already razed, its inhabitants already dead or departed, the story already at its culminating 'blank full stop' even before it has begun (*LS* p. 14, p. 153). If Freud's *Angstbereitschaft*, anxiety-preparedness, figures a (learned) desire not to be caught unaware by trauma, then it follows that a condition of anxiety is contingent upon an awareness of the aversive future.[103] That is, even as it arises as a consequence of a traumatic past, 'dreading forward' to the traumatic event is always and everywhere dependent upon progression towards the time when that event will occur.[104] The complicated temporality of *The Last September* thus

---

[101] Jed Esty, 'Virgins of Empire: *The Last September* and the Antidevelopmental Plot', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 52.3 (2007), 257-75 (p. 271). Hermione Lee, similarly, sees in the novel a 'tension between elegy and anticipation' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 47).

[102] Elizabeth Bowen, Preface to *The Last September* (1952), in *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 122-26 (p. 124). See also Margaret Scanlan, 'Rumours of War: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* and J.G. Farrell's *Troubles*', *Eire-Ireland*, 20.2 (1985), 70-89 (p. 72)).

[103] If, Freud notes, '[t]he present situation reminds me of one of the traumatic experiences I have had before [...] I will anticipate the trauma and behave as though it had already come, while there is yet time to turn aside' ('Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety' (1926), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1953-73), xx, p. 166).

[104] Lyndsey Stonebridge, *The Writing of Anxiety: Imagining Wartime in Mid-Century British Culture*, Language, Discourse, Society, ed. by Stephen Heath, Colin MacCabe and Denise Riley (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 6.

exposes the ways in which the anticipation and the recollection of trauma work, so that it suggests that in the experience of anxiety we also experience traumatic recall. It is in this conflict between anticipation and retrospection, I think, between 'branches [...] quiet as though in anxiety' and 'flowers [...] clamouring vainly, forgotten', that *The Last September* has the most to say about trauma, its expectation and its recollection, and about the ways in which trauma disrupts the configuration of linear temporality (*LS* pp. 242-43).

This temporal disruption is underpinned by the novel's emphasis on the atemporality or stasis of the Anglo-Irish, on their spatial isolation – the house and its inhabitants are 'enisled' – and on their refusal to acknowledge the future in the form of the growing political threat (p. 28). Even when the Black and Tans return Laurence's stolen watch, still ticking, the Naylors fail to read this as a threat: that is, as the countdown to Danielstown's destruction (*LS* p. 278).[105] It seems that the Anglo-Irish of *The Last September* exist in a 'perfect' present – that frozen 'moment of happiness, of perfection' on which the novel opens (*LS* p. 3, p. 4). Even Lois, who is so impatient for the future that it is as if she is 'being driven against time to catch a train', is 'helpless', paralyzed, 'cocooned' by social expectation, and 'keeps hearing that final train go out without her' (*LS* p. 66, p. 118).[106] This 'suspension' of time means that *The Last September* exists, I think, in something (or nothing) like Lois's 'ideal no-place', or in that 'gassy' vacuum

---

[105] I disagree, then, with Deirdre M. Laigle's interpretation that the returned wristwatch is 'triumphant' ('Images of the Big House in Elizabeth Bowen: *The Last September*', *Cahiers du Centre d'Etudes Irlandaises*, 9 (1984), 61-80 (p. 67)). For Esty, the novel 'reveals the impossible future (and present) of the Anglo-Irish in 1920 by narrating the impossibility of a youth with no end' ('Virgins of Empire', p. 262).

[106] For Lee, it is Lois's very 'impatience' which 'anticipates the tragic destruction of the house', as '[h]er desire to be violently precipitated into her future is granted with a vengeance: it's as though her restlessness partly *wills* the end of Danielstown' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 48).

created by all the novel's yawns (*LS* p. 5, p. 58, p. 86, p. 116, p. 127, p. 135).[107] To locate a sense of anticipation in the novel is difficult precisely because of this refusal of the novel's Anglo-Irish to imagine or acknowledge futurity; it might be seen, then, that their rejection of the future is a defence mechanism, not only against the traumatic future, but against even preparedness for it.[108] The behaviour of the Naylors and their guests is a defence doubled: a defence against the need for defence.[109]

It is in recoil from this 'blank full stop' of the 'confrontation of a positive futurelessness', that Laurence, would-be novelist, rewrites the narrative's history:

> . . . his mind ran spiderlike back on the thread spun out of itself for advance, stumbling and swerving a little over its own intricacy. He caught trains he had missed, rushing out to the boundless possible through the shining mouths of termini, re-ordered meals in a cosmopolitan blur, re-ate them, thought of thought but sheered away from that windy gulf full of a fateful clapping of empty book-covers. Far enough back, in a kind of unborn freedom, he even remade remarriages. [...] Here, in this that had been her room, Laura had lain on her wedding morning, watching a spider run up to the canopy of the bed [...] Laurence, to be acclaimed a second Weiniger, blew out his brains at – say – Avila, in a fit of temporary discouragement without having heard of Danielstown. Lois, naturally, was not born at all. (*LS* p. 153-54)

In ways that foreshadow Bowen's next novel, *Friends and Relations*, *The Last September* is thus ghosted by what Corcoran has called 'a kind of plot

---

[107] See also Esty, 'Virgins of Empire', p. 264; and Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 54.

[108] Noreen Doody recognizes that in *The Last September*, '[n]ot noticing' is 'a coping mechanism' ('Elizabeth Bowen: A Short Biography', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 1-11 (p. 3)). I think, however, that the behaviour of the Anglo-Irish in this novel is more determined than Laurence's term, 'not notic[ing]', implies (*LS* p. 58).

[109] See also Maria DiBattista, who argues that traumatic events like Gerald's death are not anticipated by the residents of Danielstown because the 'patterns of country life, its rounds of arrivals and departures, help dispel the very anxiety that would have helped the besieged community to anticipate and so possibly circumvent such violent departures', and that 'if Irish history is a nightmare from which Bowen's novel is trying to awake, it conforms to the classic Freudian description of the anxiety dream, in which traumatic events are felt to have been insufficiently anticipated' ('Elizabeth Bowen's Troubled Modernism', in *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899-1939*, ed. by Richard Begam and Michael Valdez Moses (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 226-45 (p. 237)); and F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), p. 72.

unconscious'.[110] This alternative narrative plot is, I think, a means by which Laurence works to expose the novel's voids, and to replace the supplement with that which it hides, the 'thing itself', with Laura's narrative, no longer over but now 'still impending' (*LS* p. 154). It is worth noting that Laurence's reverie is precipitated by the disappointing absence of raiders outside his window: 'there were no bicycles; no one knocked; all he had to say went sour in him' (p. 153). It is in response to this nothingness, to this 'sour' decay, then, that Laurence writes himself (and, indeed, Lois), the supplements, out of existence, in what Corcoran calls a 'dissolving oneiric vision' that makes way for the novel's spectre, Laura.[111] Yet, like Lois, for whom 'not to be known of seemed like a doom of extinction', and like Sydney in *The Hotel*, for whom '[t]he possibility of not being kept in mind seemed [...] a kind of extinction', it is impossible for Laurence not to keep himself in Laura's mind; that is, to think the trauma of his own extinction (*TH* p. 14; *LS* p. 42). His figuration of his thought, of himself as 'spiderlike', therefore exists even in the alternative plot he spins: Laurence is the spider, watched by the resurrected bride, Laura.

But Laurence is not the only one to create this kind of supplementary narrative. Hugo authors an alternative narrative plot in which, avoiding the futurelessness and passivity of his nomadic life with Francie, he can act on his love for Marda: 'he seemed to have stepped through into some kind of non-existence [...] divorced equally from fact and from probability, he set up a stage

---

[110] Corcoran, 'Discovery of a Lack', p. 318. See also my discussion of the spectral plots of *Friends and Relations* in Chapter Three.
[111] Ibid., p. 317.

for himself' (*LS* p. 259).[112] And when Lois arrives at a traumatic recognition of the futurelessness that would describe her potential marriage to Gerald, she too escapes into spatial absence, 'nonentity', an 'ideal no-place': '[s]o that was being kissed: just an impact, with inside blankness. She was lonely, and saw there was no future. She shut her eyes and tried [...] to be enclosed in nonentity, in some ideal no-place perfect and clear as a bubble' (*LS* p. 127).[113] It is when she writes to Marda of this (non-)future with Gerald that Lois is, like Laurence, halted by that 'blank full stop':

> But as a matter of fact, I have no future, in their sense. I have promised to marry Gerald.
>
> Here she paused, for from now on it was all obscure ahead of her. [...] But when she looked for Gerald there seemed too much of him. He was a wood in which she counted from tree to tree – all hers – and knew the boundary wall right round. But how to measure this unaccountable darkness between the trees, this living silence? (*LS* p. 258-59)

If it is true, as Derrida asserts, that the supplement 'is maddening because it is neither presence nor absence', then it might be seen that what Lois has recognized is precisely this 'maddening' unaccountability in Gerald, neither presence nor absence, neither the wood nor the darkness.[114] Gerald Lesworth is un(ac)countable because he is at once 'worthless' (in the sense that he is, finally, nothing to Lois), and 'too much' (in the sense that he overwhelms Lois with his desire for her).[115] Moreover, Gerald insists upon supplementing Lois with his own idea of her, an idea 'inaccessible to her; she could not affect it'; he kisses only 'the thought of

---

[112] Hugo is characterized by this 'way of avoiding things' (*LS* p. 166); in Ellmann's words, he 'wallows in his disappointments: the woman he never married, the move to Canada he never risked, the bungalow he never bought, the furniture that will never be unstored' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 61).

[113] See Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 50.

[114] Derrida, 'That Dangerous Supplement', p. 96. I think that in these instances the novel is also making a point about the nature of narrative as a shadowed supplement, and thus about the condition of secrecy in the 'ideal literary object', which I will develop in Chapter Eight.

[115] Gerald's name, Jordan has noted, puns on worthless (*How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 49).

[her]' and she is, for him, a poultice (or supplement) for 'this ache, this absence' (*LS* p. 65, p. 126, p. 238). This means that just as Lois is unable to account for Gerald, he also fails to read or to account for her, as she recognizes when she laments, '"I feel certain you have illusions about me, I don't believe you know what I'm like a bit." And while she spoke she counted the crimson strings in her racquet: three down, six across' (*LS* p. 60).[116] Here, too, what is present – the crimson strings – can be counted, while the spaces between those strings, equally important to the racquet's construction, form an unaccountable and uncounted 'darkness'. As the last sentence of this chapter, that darkness stretches across the textual vacancy until the narrative resumes. This 'unaccountable darkness' is also produced in Lois's response to overhearing Francie about to 'stop, seal, finish' her in definition: an act of violence which produces a crack in her bedroom basin, 'running between a sheaf and a cornucopia: a harvest richness to which she each day bent down her face' (*LS* p. 83). As when Lois bids goodbye to Marda through a crack in the door, to later see or speak through that crack – what Carmen Concilio describes as a 'gap in the discourse' – and wonder 'what Lois *was*' is to recognize, again, the importance of the void or the darkness when accounting for identity (*LS* p. 83, p. 202).[117]

That darkness also becomes what is unaccounted for by the Naylors, the growing threat that they refuse to acknowledge. In this second use of the metaphor

---

[116] Francie, too, has illusions about Lois's identity, the girl recognizes, when she 'feel[s] the bright girl she had been for Mrs Montmorency disintegrate: much that even she had taken to be herself went with the illusion' (*LS* p. 275).

[117] Carmen Concilio, 'Things That Do Speak in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', in *Moments of Moment: Aspects of the Literary Epiphany*, ed. by Wim Tigges, Studies in Literature 25 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 279-92 (p. 287). For Lassner, '[t]he effect of being talked about instead of spoken to, of overhearing directly the determination of one's fate, is to diminish the sense of a living self' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 36).

of the forest and the darkness in *The Last September*, the insidious dusk again blurs the boundaries of certainty:

> Looking down, it seemed to Lois they lived in a forest; space of lawns blotted out in the pressure and dusk of trees. She wondered they were not smothered; then wondered still more that they were not afraid. [...] Only the massed trees – spread like a rug to dull some keenness, break some contact between self and senses perilous to the routine of living – only the trees of the demesne were dark and exhaled darkness. [...] Dusk would lie where one looked as though it were in one's eyes, as though the fountain of darkness were in one's own perception. Seen from above, the house in its pit of trees seemed a very reservoir of obscurity; from the doors one must come out stained with it. (*LS* p. 92-93)

Danielstown is not characterized by the safety of 'home'; rather, the Big House is hidden in, and 'blotted out' by, the darkness, the 'pressure and dusk' of the 'massed trees'. Indeed, it is this inability to distinguish the trees from the darkness in this passage that is most disturbing, for even as the trees work to 'dull' or numb the 'senses' to a 'keenness [...] perilous to the routine of living' – in order, it might be seen, to 'live how one can' – the house and its residents are 'smothered' by and incorporated into the surrounding darkness. (Recall that for Laurence, this infiltration of dusk figures the very futurelessness from which he retreats, as night falls and the darkness resumes 'with an uncomfortable suggestion of normality' [p. 153].) Moreover, as they choke or drown in the dusk, the residents of Danielstown are forced to gulp in the 'fountain of darkness', to incorporate it, inescapably, into themselves, to be 'stained' with that very gap in their discourse, the threatening absent presence they refuse to name: the silenced Other that is the subaltern Irish culture.[118]

---

[118] Seamus Deane asserts that in Irish literature written in English between 1880 and 1950 can be heard the 'tragic [...] silence of the other language that haunts the English language' ('Dumbness and Eloquence: A Note on English as We Write It in Ireland', in *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory*, ed. by Clare Carroll and Patricia King (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp. 109-21 (p. 119)). It might be seen that the traumatic voids of adolescent and Anglo-Irish

This penetration of the structure and safety of the domestic by the threatening Other of 'outside' represents a traumatic collapse of that familiar dichotomy of inside and outside (culture and nature) described by Gaston Bachelard.[119] And it is in this overwhelming of the inside by the outside, the light of culture and modernity by the darkness of nature and the primitive – that is, the infiltration of the Self by the Other – that Danielstown approaches a fate already figured in the text: that of the ruined mill.[120] Indeed, Danielstown might be seen not only to be 'smothered' by the dark trees, but to begin to be substituted by the mill itself, and thus supplemented by the dark Other. Moreover, insofar as the mill is the hiding-place for the gunman Lois and Marda disturb, this ruin also functions as the site at which darkness, Otherness, and Irish rebellion coincide. This forced entry of the outside, of darkness, and of the Other therefore figures a symbolic eviction of the Naylors by the Irish rebels, even before the novel's final conflagration.

This slippage between inside and outside, the collapse of boundaries, figures the traumatic abjection of the ruin, in which, Dylan Trigg notes, '[y]ou are still *inside*. It is not that you have made it outside but that *the outside has made its*

---

identity then here expand to take in the postcolonial implications of the novel. Beth Wightman, too, recognizes the way in which the presence of 'Irish islandness [...] figured here as the IRA', threatens to overwhelm what she sees as the 'absence' of Anglo-Irish identity ('Geopolitics and the Sight of the Nation: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', *LIT*, 18.1 (2007), 37-64 (p. 51, p. 57)).

[119] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (1958; repr. Boston: Beacon, 1964). For Concilio, the threat of 'out there' is also a function of the novel's postcolonialism ('Things That Do Speak', p. 286).

[120] Cullingford states that, '[l]ike Poe's House of Usher, both Bowen's Anglo-Irish mansion and the derelict mill that prefigures its eventual fate are sentient registers of historical and psychological decay' ('Something Else', p. 292).

way in'.[121] It is that abjection, the horrific decay of the '[i]ncredible' 'corpse' of the mill which induces terror in Lois:

> 'Oh, what *is* that? The ghost of a Palace Hotel?'
>
> The mill startled them all, staring light-eyed, ghoulishly, round a bend of the valley. Lois had to come hurrying up to explain how it frightened her. In fact she wouldn't for worlds go into it but liked going as near as she dared. It was a fear she didn't want to get over, a kind of deliciousness. These dead mills – the country was full of them, never quite stripped and whitened to skeleton's decency: like corpses at their most horrible. 'Another,' Hugo declared, 'of our national grievances. English law strangled the –' [...]
>
> The river darkened and thundered towards the millrace, light came full on the high façade of decay. Incredible in its loneliness, roofless, floorless, beams criss-crossing the dank interior daylight, the whole place tottered, fit to crash at a breath. Hinges rustily bled where a door had been wrenched away; up six storeys panes still tattered the daylight. [...] the dead mill now entered the democracy of ghostliness, equalled broken palaces in futility and sadness; was transfigured by some response of the spirit, showing not the decline of its meanness, simply decline; took on all of a past to which it had given nothing. (*LS* p. 178-79)

The mill's horrifying abjection and its attendant terror is not only a function of its 'bleeding' hinges and its corpse-like qualities, but of its temporal disruption. Indeed, the ruin for Trigg is 'an object that, while still persisting in space and time, is displaced from its narrative context and so points to an elsewhere that is no longer'.[122] Several critics have explored the significance of the mill in terms of *The Last September*'s engagement with cultural and historical forces, as well as its role in the development of Lois's female (and sexual) identity.[123] Yet, what

---

[121] Dylan Trigg, *The Aesthetics of Decay: Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason*, New Studies in Aesthetics 37, ed. by Robert Ginsberg (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 249.

[122] Ibid., p. 29. A similar horror afflicts the narrator of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Fall of the House of Usher' (1839), an architectural debt acknowledged in *The Last September* (*LS* p. 180).

[123] See, for example, Corcoran, 'Discovery of a Lack', pp. 326-29; Lassner, 'The Past is a Burning Pattern', p. 51; C.L. Innes, 'Custom, Ceremony and Innocence: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', in *Troubled Histories, Troubled Fictions: Twentieth-Century Anglo-Irish Prose*, ed. by Theo D'haen and José Lanters, Costerus New Series 101 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 105-18 (p. 108); Ann Owens Weekes, *Irish Women Writers: An Uncharted Tradition* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), pp. 100-102; and Ellen M. Wolff, *'An Anarchy in the Mind and in the Heart': Narrating Anglo-Ireland* (Harrisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2006), pp. 97-98.

remains to be discussed are those ways in which the figure of the ruin, what Trigg terms 'traumatized architecture', contributes to an exploration of Bowen's writing of trauma.[124] In particular, such a reading might be seen to disrupt the architectural memorialization and monumentalization represented by, for example, *Bowen's Court* (1942).[125] The 'untimely' ruin figures the strange temporality of decay, as the architectural corpse both recalls and destroys its traumatic past – a trauma which is thus always already present.[126] In this way, the ruin holds trauma in suspense, as the liminal state of decay means that the structure is never quite 'dead', and is held in the spatial and temporal indeterminacy of 'ghostliness', of the hanging strangulation of Hugo's unfinished sentence.[127] What is striking is that Lois mimics that suspense when she approaches the mill, not only holding her fear in abeyance, but appearing to hold her breath for fear of the ruin's collapse (*LS* p. 179). Before the ruin, Lois mirrors the mill's tension, compelled to bear witness to the continuing event of trauma it audaciously displays.

Just as the silences in a text point to the impossibility of representing trauma, the unspeakable 'limit-event', so too the cracks and crevasses of the ruin

---

[124] Dylan Trigg, 'The Place of Trauma: Memory, Hauntings, and the Temporality of Ruins', *Memory Studies*, 2.1 (2009), 87-101 (p. 94).

[125] In Bowen's description of the architecture of Bowen's Court in her family memoir, she maintains the present tense because, she says, '*I* saw no reason to transpose it into the past. There is a sort of perpetuity about livingness, and it is part of the character of Bowen's Court to be, in sometimes its silent way, very much alive' (*Bowen's Court*, Neglected Books of the Twentieth Century (1942; repr. New York: Ecco, 1979), p. 459).

[126] 'The untimeliness is evident in how past, present, and future conspire to converge in the ruin. Having outlived its functional existence, the ruin's persistence in time disproves outright extinction, so compels an unexpected return' (Trigg, *The Aesthetics of Decay*, p. 131). See also Corcoran, who suggests that '[t]here is a real, if paradoxical, sense therefore in which history is most present in *The Last September* when it is most absent' ('Discovery of a Lack', p. 321).

[127] Robert Tracy reads Lois and Marda's discovery of the Irish rebel as an encounter with the undead ('Undead, Unburied: Anglo-Ireland and the Predatory Past', *LIT*, 10.1 (1999), 13-33 (pp. 26-27)). See also Julian Moynahan, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 244, and Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 65.

figure the unpresentable.[128] Furthermore, the traumatized structure of the ruin itself forms a cleft in the landscape not unlike the absent presence of traumatic memory in the human psyche.[129] In this way, Corcoran argues, the mill becomes 'the novel's ultimate ellipsis'.[130] While the traumatic event at the mill remains unspoken, it leaves its mark in a literal puncture through the skin of Marda's hand. Like this wound, the ruin figures the paradox of remembering and forgetting which describes traumatic memory; that is, at once a presence and an absence, the supplement and its void. Marda's wound bears witness to the unspeakable.

This reading of *The Last September*'s traumatized architecture sheds light on Laura's spectral and textual presence in Danielstown; she is one of those 'indefinite ghosts of the past' Bowen has described, who 'add something' to those ancestral homes of the Anglo-Irish.[131] Like the supplement, the ghost is maddeningly 'neither presence nor absence'. While Laura's initials on the walls of the box-room and her signature engraved on an upstairs window pane with a diamond do not, Julie Anne Stevens asserts, represent 'an actual presence [...], at times in the novel, she seems to be nearly there – certainly, she continues to affect the living'.[132] What I want to suggest is that the textual traces Laura has left engraved upon the walls and windows of the house function, like the ruin, as sites of memory and of non-memory (*LS* p. 192, pp. 234-35). While these traces act as marks of decay upon the Big House, they simultaneously refuse the destruction of their author's memorialization, so that Danielstown comes to act as a tomb for

---

[128] See Trigg, 'The Place of Trauma', p. 99.
[129] Ibid., p. 95.
[130] Corcoran, 'Discovery of a Lack', p. 327.
[131] Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Big House' (1940), in *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 25-30 (p. 28).
[132] Julie Anne Stevens, 'Bowen: The Critical Response', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 179-92 (p. 187).

Laura's remains, and moreover, to figure a conflation of the dead woman with the house.[133] If the sign (and here, the signature) does indeed function as supplement for 'the thing itself' through that 'power of substitution that permits us to absent ourselves and act by proxy', then Laura's textual traces figure the supplement for her absence.[134] Through the novel's repeated acts of reading these traces, Laura is resurrected; she is immortalized in text. Indeed, for Hugo she *is* text: she is, for him, like 'some rediscovered diary of a forgotten year' (*LS* p. 176).

If Laura is supplemented by her textual remains, Danielstown's box-room is her crypt. Thus, in the epigraph to this chapter, Lois chooses that site for a 'melanchol[ic]' hiding place.[135] However, I suggest that it is not her mother's sign or supplement which Lois seeks, but rather, 'the thing itself': her dead mother. The box-room is 'too damp for the storage of trunks that were not finished with', and is permeated by a 'mustiness [coming] from her mother's old vaulted trunks', and may thus be seen as a site of decay or ruin in the Big House, a 'no-place' (when hiding here, Lois is 'not anywhere'), a spatio-temporal site of non-memory (*LS* p. 192).[136] That cleft in Danielstown means that this Big House approaches the traumatized architecture of the mill and mimics the structure of the traumatized psyche, as the box-room forms the site of trauma, of absence and presence, of memory and non-memory, in the house. Thus, for Lois to '[look and

---

[133] See also Lassner's discussion of maternity in 'The Past is a Burning Pattern', p. 42, p. 43.
[134] Derrida, 'That Dangerous Supplement', p. 87. Ellmann also reads Laura's textual traces as 'literal' signatures (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 59).
[135] Bennett and Royle present a detailed examination of Laura's cryptic presence in the laurels of the novel (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 17). It might also be seen that she cryptically reappears in the Laurel of Bowen's next novel, *Friends and Relations*.
[136] Wightman also sees Danielstown as site 'characterized by an absence' ('Geopolitics and the Sight of the Nation', p. 51); see also Wolff, *Narrating Anglo-Ireland*, pp. 101-102; and Ingman, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women*, p. 69. Laura's writing on the box-room wall might also be seen to represent the house's decay (and, indeed, the fall of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy) in terms of the connotations of 'writing on the wall' – supernatural writing which, in the Book of Daniel, predicts the demise of the Babylonian empire.

strain] after feeling', but to '[feel] nothing', does not describe an absence of feeling towards her mother, but rather, suggests that in the box-room she 'feels' the 'nothingness', the absence of her mother, and moreover, that behind the supplement of the textual and architectural trace, there is the void that represents her mother, 'the thing itself'. Furthermore, Lois herself comes to figure a trace or supplement of Laura, 'the image of Laura', as she is described throughout the novel; indeed, for Bennett and Royle, 'Lois is recognized, known, because she is the image of her mother, a simulacrum or phantom of the dead, a fiction, "like a novel"' (*LS* p. 4, p. 17, p. 84, pp. 87-88, p. 115).[137] To recognize the girl's spatial negations – she is repeatedly stated to be 'nowhere' – is then also to recognize the void of Laura for whom her daughter is the sign (*LS* p. 45, p. 124, p. 285). But Lois is not only the supplement for her mother; the girl may also be seen as the (literal) sign of her father, whose absence from the narrative is so profound it is not even remarked upon.[138] All that remains of the elusive Mr Farquar is the patronym borne only by Lois (even his wife, Laura, is never referred to by her married name). Lois's own sign, a sign which marks her out as not of this house, not a Naylor, is haunted by a void: the absence of her father. The absence of the girl's parents, then, inflects the way in which Lois 'and these home surroundings still penetrated each other mutually in the discovery of a lack' (*LS* p. 244).

The Last September also works as a supplement for another void: Gerald. Gerald, always already dead, is throughout the novel characterized by a strange non-existence, an inability to be traced, so that, for example, 'his steps on the grass [die] out quickly' (*LS* p. 80, p. 122). For Lois to suddenly see 'him as

---

[137] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 17.
[138] 'Lois's father [...] is so insignificant that Bowen never bothers to explain his absence' (Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 59).

though he were dead, as though she had lost him, with the pang of an evocation', is to collapse the supplement's charade; swiftly, she revitalises him in her letter to Viola (p. 70). Gerald, recognize Bennett and Royle, 'cannot be figured, he can only be seen, in fact, dead. Gerald can only be evoked, called from the dead: Gerald can only be described or perceived as if, or if, he was dead'.[139] Like those 'dead young [men]' in the photographs which fill Mrs Fogarty's drawing-room, whose 'candid eyes' one cannot avoid, Gerald is haunted by the spectre of his futurelessness, a death that has always already taken place (*LS* p. 102).[140] 'You know I'd die for you', he tells Lois, but that 'you' also addresses the reader in a self-conscious awareness of the novel's inevitable conclusion; that is, Gerald (like Danielstown) must be executed, sacrificed in and for the narrative, even as his own writing 'run[s] for life' (*LS* p. 128, p. 238).

A conflict has arisen in this chapter's consideration of trauma in spatial terms; that is, in the tension between architectural trauma, the ruin, as a 'non-memory', and the monumentalization or immortalization of an event in a structure. Indeed, even though Klaus Lubbers, for example, argues that the Big House in the Big House novel shows 'continuity' simply by being, 'whether still intact or crumbling', 'still there', the voids of that very decay, as I have explored, testify to the structure's spatial and temporal uncertainty.[141] That conflict between

---

[139] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 21. See also Lassner, 'The Past is a Burning Pattern', p. 46.

[140] For Derek Hand, '[t]he English soldiers, especially those that have been in the trenches of the First World War, are haunted and haunting characters, tenuously holding on to the world of the living' ('Ghosts from Our Future: Bowen and the Unfinished Business of Living', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 65-76 (p. 72)). Daventry, for example, looks at Lois 'like a ghost', and is 'hardly even a person' (*LS* p. 229, p. 231). See also Kreilkamp, 'Bowen: Ascendancy Modernist', p. 20; and Corcoran, 'Discovery of a Lack', p. 331.

[141] Klaus Lubbers, 'Continuity and Change in Irish Fiction: The Case of the Big-House Novel', in *Ancestral Voices: The Big House in Anglo-Irish Literature*, ed. by Otto Rauchbauer (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1992), pp. 17-29 (p. 27). See also Wolff, *Narrating Anglo-Ireland*, p. 92.

erasure and immortality, between de(con)struction and preservation, necessarily complicates an understanding of memorialization and trauma in this novel. At its conclusion, then, the narrative opens up a temporal cleft:

> For in February, before those leaves had visibly budded, the death – the execution, rather – of the three houses, Danielstown, Castle Trent, Mount Isabel, occurred in the same night. A fearful scarlet ate up the hard spring darkness; indeed, it seemed that an extra day, unreckoned, had come to abortive birth that these things might happen. [...] At Danielstown, half way up the avenue under the beeches, the thin iron gate twanged (missed its latch, remained swinging aghast) as the last unlit car slid out with the executioners bland from accomplished duty. [...] Then the first wave of a silence that was to be ultimate flowed back confidently to the steps. [...]
>
> Sir Richard and Lady Naylor, not saying anything, did not look at each other, for in the light from the sky they saw too distinctly. (*LS* p. 303)

That 'unreckoned' 'extra day' is the 'accident of day, of action' of which Laurence's 'spectral plot' could not conceive (p. 153). This extra day figures a temporal cleft in which occurs the novel's trauma: the 'execution' of the house. Aflame, the house eats up or incorporates the darkness that had earlier threatened it; it swallows, and is swallowed up by, the darkness to which it has been condemned. The novel thus concludes in a climactic and permanent suspension of the traumatic executions of both Danielstown and Gerald, events which Lois does not want to '[get] past', or mourn, but rather maintain (*LS* p. 266, p. 299). Indeed, the novel itself does not 'get past' these deaths, for its conclusion remains on the house's threshold and in the 'aghast' horror of the perpetually swinging gate, as well as in that 'wave of a silence' – a 'wave' that has been crashing since the announcement of Gerald's murder (p. 292). Foreshadowing the conclusion of *Eva Trout*, Danielstown, like Eva, is suspended or stilled in the final trauma, the moment of death.

3

Remains:

Friends and Relations and *The House in Paris*

Everything we read: remains.[142]

Going into the morning-room, Karen found the pad back on the bureau, where it lived. But it was blank: the message had been torn off – and torn off unprecisely, leaving an edge jagged. The blank pad was scored with curves where writing had dug through; the sheets were thin, her mother's pencil emphatic. Karen stared at it; then, bringing the pad nearer to the light, she took the pencil and traced her mother's dinted writing. What she read was: Karen. 6-30 Saturday. Evelyn Derrick rang you up to talk plans for next week-end. She says will you ring her up on Monday when you are home, before she leaves London?[143]

In *After Derrida*, Nicholas Royle asserts that '[a]ll of Derrida's work can be read as an attempt to respond to [the] question of "remains" – especially, but not only, to the question of "remains as a written thing"'.[144] And in her work *Stigmata*, Cixous similarly takes up this connection between texts and remains when she makes that provocative statement which forms an epigraph to this chapter: '[e]verything we read: remains'. In this chapter I want to think about what this 'question of "remains"' might mean for Bowen's novels *Friends and Relations* and *The House in Paris*, and to suggest that an understanding of remains might shed light on the ways in which these novels explore trauma in terms of narrative

---

[142] Cixous, 'Without End, No, State of Drawingness, No, Rather: The Executioner's Taking Off', p. 26.

[143] Elizabeth Bowen, *The House in Paris* (1935; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 171. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *HP*.

[144] 'This is evident from the consistent deployment of a number of terms across his oeuvre, including the trace, remainder (*restance*), cinders (*cendre*), ruins and ghosts' (Nicholas Royle, *After Derrida* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 61).

traces, or textual ruins, 'ghosted' by secrecy and the past, and that both subsequently propose that the act of reading involves textual and temporal recovery.[145] I suggest that *Friends and Relations* is haunted by the remains of an alternative narrative plot that threatens to disrupt the present, and that in *The House in Paris*, disruption occurs as a result of the illicit reading of textual remains. Lee has argued that '"the" house' of *The House in Paris* is 'a kind of haunted house'.[146] I think, however, that it is not only the house in Paris but *The House in Paris* (and, indeed, *Friends and Relations*) which might be described as haunted. In this chapter I want to extend this understanding of the hauntedness of these novels in order to develop the ways in which we think about secrecy, spectrality, and literature – about textual absence and presence, about remains – in Bowen's fiction. Both *The House in Paris* and *Friends and Relations* ask, it seems, after trauma, what remains of narrative? How might we who remain read, after?

The House in Paris is an aftermath. Everything we read, in this novel, is remains, the remains of lives shattered by a single act, a single lie, a single secret. Reading *The House in Paris* is like reading a message erased, or torn up; it is like reading the lost letter of an empty envelope. We read the spectre of a text, conjecturing a narrative from its remains. *The House in Paris*: remains. (While in its midst, the house in Paris remains.) Working through the very indirectness of trauma, I suggest that *The House in Paris* provokes a reading beyond the text, through its silences, in both form and content. Both Karen and her son Leopold

---

[145] Eluned Summers-Bremner also addresses the traumas of *The House in Paris*, and argues for the novel's emphasis on working towards recovery ('Dead Letters and Living Things: Historical Ethics in *The House in Paris* and *The Death of the Heart*', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 61-82).

[146] Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 80.

perform acts of spectral reading which legitimize similar practices for the reader of this novel. The proliferating ellipses, which occur more frequently than in Bowen's other novels, at once shatter the text and encourage a reading within these lacunae, inside the fissures (those secret-keeping Fishers) of the narrative. Each ellipsis of this novel figures another 'crack across the crust of life', another 'crack [in] the tomb', another shattered alabaster lid, forcing the reader's awareness of trauma into line with that of Karen Michaelis and her mother (*HP* p. 127, p. 203, p. 212). In this chapter I will explore the construction of *The House in Paris* within and from the traumatic remains of the past; the narrative itself, I suggest, is the 'young tree inside a tomb' which 'discover[s] the power to crack the tomb and grow up to any height' (p. 203). This novel is haunted by gaps which invite the reader to write into and out of the text, just as, I will show, Leopold writes himself into and out of his mother's missing letter, the novel, and the past. I suggest that the second section of the novel, 'The Past', in which the story of the illicit love affair between Karen and Max Ebhart is played out, is itself a fictional construct arising from the 'clairvoyant' act of Leopold Grant Moody, the product – the remains – of this affair. Just as he 'thought-read[s]' from the empty envelope, Leopold reads into and writes over the silences that surround his existence (*HP* p. 59).[147] Indeed, for Bowen, the act of writing fiction arises from the desire to supplement life with imagination: 'I think it was an extension of the imaginative play thing a child has – that life isn't amusing enough, so you build it up with imagination of your own. An intense desire to do something or make

[147] Bennett and Royle make the similar point that Leopold 'becomes the preternatural reader of his own text' (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 57).

something [...] a desire to add more'.[148] The novel's central section, 'The Past', similarly works as supplement to the present, growing through those cracks in the tomb, the hanging pause after Naomi's momentous announcement: '[y]our mother is not coming; she cannot come' (*HP* p. 66, p. 191). This sentence appears twice in the novel: at the conclusion of the first section entitled 'The Present', and to introduce the resumption of the present in the third section. By framing 'The Past' with a repetition of the same sentence, the text works to hide the events of the second section; no time has passed in the present whilst we have read 'The Past'.[149] By returning the reader to precisely the point at which narration of 'The Present' was left, the novel refuses that narrative of 'The Past'. As no time has passed, no narrative could have happened, this repetition asserts. *The House in Paris* remains tight-lipped: in this novel, the past is kept secret from the present.

The House in Paris adopts a tripartite structure – 'The Present', 'The Past', 'The Present' – and as in Bowen's later novel, *The Little Girls*, the structure forms an encryption of the past by the present. In this way, the novel's structure echoes the way in which 'trauma breaks up the forward movement of time, to inscribe metalepsis as a structuring principle'.[150] The 'present' sections of the novel span a single day in Paris – Henrietta Arbuthnot, an eleven-year-old girl crossing Paris alone, must spend the day in the care of Naomi Fisher, a friend of her grandmother, while she waits for her evening train. Another child, Leopold, is also present in the house on this day, awaiting a visit from his mother, Karen

---

[148] Elizabeth Bowen, interview with John Bowen, William Craig, and W.N. Ewer (broadcast 11 September 1959), HRHRC 2.3, p. 5.

[149] 'No time', Harriett Blodgett also observes, 'has elapsed while the Past explained Karen's non-appearance. Time advances only in the Present' ('The Necessary Child: *The House in Paris*' in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 63-79 (p. 68)).

[150] Christine van Boheemen-Saaf, *Joyce, Derrida, Lacan, and the Trauma of History: Reading, Narrative and Postcolonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 19.

Forrestier (née Michaelis), whom he has never met, having been adopted from birth. While the monstrous Mme Fisher, whose house in Paris this is, lies ill overhead, 'septic' with a past that seeps through the house and its narrative, the two children, left alone, curiously and painfully discuss the secrets of which Naomi has warned them not to speak: '[t]here is no end to the violations committed by children on children, quietly talking alone. Henrietta dreaded what [Leopold] might say next' (*HP* p. 31, p. 208).[151] For Henrietta, these 'violations' are concerned with the expectation of reliving the traumatic past – it is the potential horror of '[h]elpless' remembering with which Leopold taunts her (*HP* p. 31). Yet when his torture reaches its climax – '[y]ou see, you and I are just opposites. I *don't* remember my mother, but *shall* see her again' – the 'effect' upon Henrietta is 'odd': the girl 'seemed to become unconscious of Leopold' (p. 32). Henrietta appears to forget her companion, and to push the threat of dredging up the past into her 'unconscious', the very site of forgetting in which that traumatic memory lies. But when Karen does not arrive, Leopold must relive the trauma of his infant abandonment on hearing Naomi's news. Although he initially mimics Henrietta's response to such provocation, 'disengaging himself from [Naomi] and from everyone', his acknowledgement that 'my mother is not here' 'echoe[s]' and reverberates, returning and repeating back to him the traumatic event of his coming into being (p. 191).

All of this occurs in 'The Present'. The central section of the novel, 'The Past', is narrated from the perspective of Karen, who feels stifled by the restrictions of her upper-middle-class life and longs to revolt against the desires of

---

[151] 'But the play of secrecy', Matei Calinescu states, 'is perceived to be, and often is, more immediately *dangerous*. Children sometimes use play to express secret wishes under the protective umbrella of the as-if' (*Rereading* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 245).

her mother, and against Ray, Karen's fiancé, for '[t]o be with Ray will be like being with mother' (p. 153). Years before, Karen had lived for a year in the house in Paris, then a boarding-house run by Mme Fisher and Naomi for mothers to send 'dependable daughters' for whom they wished 'freedom inside the bounds of propriety' (p. 102). Here Karen had met a young friend of Mme Fisher, Max Ebhart, by whom she was at once angered and fascinated (p. 99). Naomi's announcement that she is engaged to Max revives Karen's earlier passion for the young man; their illicit affair – brief, but just long enough to conceive Leopold – 'is like an epilogue to a book' (p. 109). This section of the narrative ends after Max's dramatic suicide in the very salon in which Henrietta and Leopold now play, and Karen's subsequent decision to break off her engagement and to travel abroad until after the birth of her child. Yet, I want to argue that we might read this section of the novel as a supposition of Leopold's, narrated by his idea of 'the mother who did not come', and who therefore 'remained his creature': '[i]n the course of that meeting that never happened, that meeting whose scene remained inside Leopold, [Karen] would have told what she had done without looking for motives. […] This is, in effect, what she would have had to say' (p. 67, p. 68). What Karen says, the narrative that forms 'The Past' is, I suggest, what Leopold supplies her with, what he imagines 'she would have had to say' if she had come to visit as he had expected, if she had spoken to him 'as he had thought she would' (*HP* p. 68).[152] The child does not, cannot know the events that 'made me be'; indeed, he 'swelled with content at his own ignorance of the past' (*HP* p. 67, p. 193). The meeting of Leopold and Karen is a narrative of a never-arriving

[152] Kelly also recognizes that 'the past section of *The House in Paris* is presented as hypothetical' ('The Power of the Past: Structural Nostalgia in Elizabeth Bowen's *The House in Paris* and *The Little Girls*', *Style*, 36.1 (2002), 1-18 (p. 7)).

future for which we are always waiting, even at the novel's conclusion; the novel simply leaves us, in transit, on a station platform.[153] *The House in Paris* is, I suggest, a narrative of Leopold's expectation, formed by the remains of a 'meeting whose scene remained inside' him.

Cixous's reading of Derrida's *Circumfessions* and its scattered 'remains' is uncannily reminiscent of (perhaps even ghosted by) *The House in Paris*; it puts Leopold in mind and moreover, puts in mind 'the questions he had kept waiting so long for [Karen]', those questions which she never arrives to answer: 'Why am I? What made me be?' (*HP* p. 67).[154] The mother 'at the last moment, when he asked her "who am I?" did not answer him', notes Cixous of Derrida's text; 'she never was able to answer the question what am I':

> We need the mother's acknowledgement, she's the one we ask for the words [...], the word that glues the pieces back together again. When she doesn't answer for me, I am broken. But how should she answer for a me? I am lodged in incapacity and there I remain me on one hand my name on the other, the name calls me and who am I to answer? Here I remain, here I am a remains. [...]
>
> She remains to him, in leaving, after her departure, like those questions without response that come back to haunt us.[155]

Part of what is so interesting about *The House in Paris*, I think, is that Karen may be said to play out (or to be haunted by) the logic of the mother as articulated by Cixous and Derrida. How should the mother answer for the child, how should Karen answer for Leopold's existence, how should she answer for what remains

---

[153] Lee also observes this atmosphere of eternal waiting (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 82); see also Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 120. Kelly suggests that in both *The House in Paris* and *The Little Girls*, 'the middle section moves backward and so produces a stasis that interrupts the forward momentum of the text' ('The Power of the Past', p. 2).

[154] 'The search for identity in *The House in Paris*', points out Timothy Dow Adams, 'becomes an exercise in memory, designed to show Leopold in the act of creating his sense of self by simultaneously inventing and remembering the past' ('"Bend Sinister": Duration in Elizabeth Bowen's *The House in Paris*', *International Fiction Review*, 7 (1980), 49-52 (p. 50)).

[155] Hélène Cixous, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint*, trans. by Beverley Bie Brahic, European Perspectives (2001; repr. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 51-52.

of the past? The 'indecipherable, evasive' mother for Derrida and in this novel, for Leopold, maintains her narrative silence; she 'keeps her secret', she fails to speak for herself and, indeed therefore, for her child.[156] It is precisely because she remains silent that Leopold must imagine her testimony to his 'broken' identity and construct a spectral interruption to the present.

The central section of the novel, then, seeks to 'answer for a me', for although it narrates the past, this portion of the text is fixated on Leopold as its sole issue. Leopold's imagination of Karen's testimony is prefaced by a statement of memory untainted, of the past cinematically replayed with careful unawareness of the future, 'the whole being':

> You suppose the spools of negatives that are memory (from moments when the whole being was, unknown, exposed), developed without being cut for a false reason: entire letters, dialogues which, once spoken, remain spoken for ever being unwound from the dark, word by word. (*HP* p. 68)

However, the recurring sense of anticipation and awareness of the future in this section betrays Leopold's fictional retrospection: it is pregnant with the thought of the future, of him. Endlessly, the novel's many clocks 'march ticking on through the dark', moving ever forward to the inevitable child, mimicking the tick-tock of Karen's perpetual thought, 'What next? What next?' (p. 69, p. 87). The atmosphere of Aunt Violet and Uncle Bill's home, where 'The Past' begins, is great with the anticipation of death – 'what was going to happen stood at the door' (p. 86). Karen's inescapable future is foreshadowed when she reads this prospect 'as though those two were a couple expecting their first child' (p. 82). Immediately, then, this fictional remembering is directed towards its conclusion of birth (Leopold) and death (Max). Karen's expectations for the first year of her

---

[156] Ibid., p. 52.

marriage also project the anticipation of memory; she looks to a now foreign future made familiar – to a strange child, to unknown 'times of day in the future house, making tomorrow fatten thin today' (p. 124). In the same way that Leopold imagines the moment of his mother's arrival as an event soon to be part of memory – '[f]rom that door opening, I shall remember on. [...] I shall see what I cannot imagine now' – so too is 'Karen's' narrative concerned with the making of memory, with what will in future remain of the past (*HP* p. 40).[157] It is such temporal reflexivity of which Karen writes, when she states that 'something in Ireland bends one back on oneself' (*HP* p. 89). To 'bend back', in *The House in Paris*, is to consider the present from the perspective of the future, a desire to 'give the future something to talk about' (*HP* p. 144).[158] Everything lived – everything we read – remains to be remembered. And, if it is true, as Bowen states in 'The Bend Back' (1950), that '[i]t is not the past but the idea of the past which draws us', it might be seen that the present, in this novel, only holds fascination in terms of an abstracted becoming-past, a becoming-memory.[159]

Leopold's desire to foresee the future of his meeting with Karen – to know not only 'what made me be', but what will make him be – and his demand that Henrietta tell his fortune using a pack of cards, is also a longing to know the past.

---

[157] Mark Currie describes this as an act of narrative anticipation: '[i]f, in order to look back at what has happened, we tell a story, we must also know that the present is a story yet to be told. The present is the object of a future memory, and we live it as such, in anticipation of the story we will tell later, envisaging the present as past' (*About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 5).

[158] The link between this statement and Bowen's essay, 'The Bend Back', is adequately explored in extant criticism. See, for example, Adams, 'Bend Sinister', p. 51; and Lee's *Elizabeth Bowen*, which includes a chapter entitled 'The Bend Back'. For Jean Radford, this novel disrupts 'linear progression, and the reader's experience of the "plot" events – as a sequence of cause and effect – is dislocated' ('Late Modernism and the Politics of History', in *Women Writers of the 1930s: Gender, Politics and History*, ed. by Maroula Joannou (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 33-45 (p. 39)).

[159] Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Bend Back' (1950), in *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 54-60 (p. 58).

It is for this reason, perhaps, that Henrietta's reading of the future confuses narrative time and real time, for her prediction of death when Leopold turns up the ten of spades is for the novel's future, rather than Leopold's (*HP* p. 64). Henrietta's fortune-telling at once summons Max's suicide in the historical past and foresees it in the future of the novel's 'The Past'. But the boy wishes not so much to know the future, but rather, he says, to '[make] things happen', to make memory (p. 65). His destruction of Henrietta's occult circle of cards when she fails to 'make anything come' might thus be read as an attempt to erase or to hide the beginning of a memory formation with which he is dissatisfied (p. 65). But he is too late, the cards are dealt; they call forth the predicted future through the messenger Miss Fisher, who insists that '[s]omething unforeseen must have happened', even while her 'eyes streamed as she rode at him like the figurehead of a ship' – the very 'gilt ship' which adorns the backs of Henrietta's 'foreseeing' cards (p. 65, p. 66, p. 193).

For Bennett and Royle, this clairvoyant concern for an unavoidable future is figured by the repetitions of the word 'dread' in the novel; dread, they point out, 'suggests a fear of future events, a fear grounded in the present [...] the subject of dread is caught up in – already dreading, and therefore already experiencing – the event which is dreaded'.[160] Dread, then, might be seen to engage a temporal reversal of traumatic memory, the unbidden re-experiencing of the past, in what we might call a traumatic clairvoyance, an unbidden 'already experiencing' of the future. Indeed, it is in Henrietta's clairvoyant act that the novel might be seen to be 'already experiencing' its own traumatic future – Max's suicide and Leopold's

---

[160] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 61.

hidden identity. Max's fate is foreseen, or already experienced in the text, first when Henrietta remembers 'how much blood had been shed in Paris', and then at least twice by Max himself who, when Naomi accidentally pricks herself with a needle, 'wished the blood were on my own finger', and admits to Karen that '[w]hen I cut myself even slightly, I bleed like a pig, profusely' (*HP* p. 22, p. 139, p. 162). This anticipation of bloodshed works against Naomi's belief that Max 'had foreseen nothing', and against Mme Fisher's insistence that 'no trace led us' to Max's remains (p. 183, p. 185). And *The House in Paris* does not only foresee its own conclusion: to read *The House in Paris* is to be 'already experiencing' the traumatic future of Bowen's later writing. This novel twice anticipates the violent conclusion to *Eva Trout*: when Karen imagines 'whipping a pistol out of her kid bag and firing', and when Ray recognizes in Leopold that '[a] child knows what is fatal' (*HP* p. 125, p. 220).[161] 'The child at the back of the gun accident', Ray asks, 'is he always so ignorant? I simply point this thing, it goes off' (*HP* p. 220). Aunt Violet's death, too, is felt by Karen and by the reader to greater effect prior to this traumatic event – '[s]he died before this, thought Karen' (p. 128). Karen's mother and father, however, had not anticipated this trauma: '[e]veryone blamed Uncle Bill for letting Aunt Violet's death come as such a shock; Karen did not even ask herself why *she* had said nothing' (p. 131). She does not ask herself why she had said 'nothing' – an act which prefigures her later deceptions – indeed, more precisely, why Karen had said of her aunt, '[s]he said nothing', when questioned by Mrs Michaelis (p. 127). In protecting her mother from dread, from a traumatic 'already experiencing' of the future, Karen also prevents her mother from

[161] Glendinning and Bennett and Royle recognize that the fatal weapon of *Eva Trout* 'originate[s]' in *The House in Paris* (Glendinning, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 226; Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 172).

experiencing in the present, as 'the shock' of this sudden knowledge means that she does not 'feel anything else yet' (p. 127). Later, it is suggested that the death of Mrs Michaelis was hastened by 'the shock of her sister's death' (and, circumspectly, by the shock of her daughter's pre-marital pregnancy) – in short, she is shocked to death by Karen's lies (p. 219).

A kind of textual haunting or anticipation also inflects what I want to call Leopold's 'spectral reading' of his mother's thoughts, not only in relation to the central section of the narrative, but also when he discovers in Naomi's handbag an empty envelope which had contained a letter from his mother. Leopold attempts a kind of psychic dictation of the absent note:

> Getting up and pushing back the chairs, he began to pace the salon, with his eyes shut, pressing her empty envelope to his forehead as he had once seen a thought-reader do. Then he began to read slowly aloud, as though the words one by one passed under his eyelids: 'Dear Miss Fisher,' he said. (p. 45)

Yet Leopold is, of course, not reading his mother's thoughts, but rather his own. Thus, he again projects his own desires onto those of his mother, for he believes that '[s]he's the same as me; she would see why I do things!' (p. 59). His insistence upon psychological symbiosis with a woman he has not met 'since he can remember' gives him, he thinks, moral permission to not only touch her letters, but to appropriate her voice, to write this letter and later, to write the past, in her name (*HP* p. 20).[162] Leopold thus reads the absence or secret of the missing letter, the missing mother, from what remains: himself. That is, like a detective,

---

[162] Henrietta informs Leopold of this moral code when she finds him 'thought-reading' the letter: 'It's dishonourable to *touch* other people's letters' (*HP* p. 59). 'To Henrietta', note Bennett and Royle, 'Leopold's "reading" transgresses the conventions both of sanity [...] and of a kind of insane decorum' (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 48). Moreover, in *Friends and Relations*, Edward is similarly horrified when Janet asks to read a letter not written to her: '"Show me the letter." "No, I couldn't," said Edward, appalled. "That would be absolutely impossible!"' (*FR* p. 88)

Leopold hunts for textual clues to his mother's past, delving into Henrietta's suitcase and into Miss Fisher's handbag 'with the immediate thought that inside there might be letters about him' (*HP* p. 39). Yet Leopold is not only the detective, but also already the evidence of the crime, the fingerprint at the scene, the 'mark [...] on the grass' which, in the novel, comes to signify Max and Karen's illicit touch and the commencement of their romantic affair (p. 153). Leopold is what remains of Karen's lie: he exposes her, he exposes what she hides, twice over.

> Her life had been full of warnings; the first was: 'You will get wet.' They warn you because they love you and because you are theirs. Now, here she lay as it would be death to those loving warners to know she lay. Not her hiddenness now but her unhiddenness made her heart thump chokingly, as it did years ago when, playing hide and seek, she heard the steps of the seekers go by just the other side of the curtain, or heard them come into the dark room where she hid. The curtain would fall, the light would discover her before she could slip out to bolt for 'home,' which used to be by the gong, at the foot of the stairs. Once you were 'home' you won, you could not be caught. [...] Once 'home' you are safe; you cannot be caught; no one knows where you were hiding. (pp. 154-55)

What frightens Karen is that her secret, her child, is impossible to keep; she must choose between giving herself away, or giving away her child. Her failure to heed the warnings of those who had foreseen danger, to read the traces of a traumatic future – 'beware, as the gypsy said!' – nullifies her hiding-place (p. 93). 'Now, here she lay', and here she lies, lying even as she lay. In echo of Janet in *Friends and Relations*, 'ashamed to be lying here' the day after her infidelity, it is not just her laying but her lying which 'would be death to those loving warners', against whom she now transgresses (*FR* p. 129). Her ideal of a 'safe' home figures a childish stoicism which mimics her mother's attitude to the outbreak of war (*HP*

p. 174).[163] Inescapably, Karen's lie is, like Max, their affair, and their child-to-be, homeless. Of course, the irony of Karen's analogy is that now, it is once she is home that she is caught. Moreover, it is Karen herself who exposes the lie, who brings it, and herself, out into the open. It is only Karen who hides and seeks – her mother, in refusing to play the game, holds Karen in her lie, keeps her trembling behind the curtain (the 'stuffy draped' curtain against which Max had earlier sat) until she bolts for home: '[s]he has made me lie for a week. She will hold me inside the lie till she makes me lose the power I felt I had' (*HP* p. 109, p. 174).[164]

Karen's lies and silences, her unexplained absences, continue in the present. As I have already noted, Leopold (and the reader) must reread his mother's absence: twice, Naomi's news is reported.[165] Yet this traumatic repetition is not over:

> 'Because my mother is not here.'
>
> Leopold, having said this in an experimentary voice, stopped to hear it echoed, looking, meanwhile, self-compellingly at and through Henrietta, as though '*My mother is not here*,' were written all over her – face, dress, hair – and he were forcing himself to read it again and again and again. (*HP* p. 195)

Aurally and textually, Karen's absence is repeated, echoed, reread. To live through trauma once 'is enough', Karen admits to Naomi; nevertheless, she forces her child to endure recurring abandonment (*HP* p. 186).[166] Over and over she is not coming, she does not come; over and over Leopold anticipates, already

---

[163] Similarly, in the sense that the Michaelis family lives 'like a family in a pre-war novel in one of the tall, cream houses in Chester Terrace, Regent's Park', they might be described as living as in a work of fiction (*HP* p. 70).

[164] Lassner describes Mrs Michaelis' behaviour as 'something which creates an empty space that haunts Karen, foreshadowing the silent distance Karen later creates between herself and Leopold' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 77).

[165] See also Corcoran, *The Enforced Return*, p. 82; and Summers-Bremner, 'Dead Letters and Living Things', p. 72.

[166] For Bennett and Royle, both *The House in Paris* and Leopold himself may be read as 'a traumaturgy, both a work and a theory of wounds' (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 43, p. 45).

(re)experiences the trauma of yet another of Karen's betrayals, rereading Mme Fisher's unauthorized assertion, '[t]hat she must not love you was written on her heart' (*HP* p. 207). Leopold exhibits a Freudian 'compulsion to repeat' (or to reread) the traumatic event, the trauma of abandonment, as he 'self-compellingly [...] forc[es] himself to read it again and again and again'. In this way, rereading is proposed as analogous to the traumatic repetitions of the psyche, the unconscious drive to revisit and to work through the memory of trauma.[167]

It is the simultaneous compulsion to repeat and to reread the past, and yet to refuse its irruption into the present, with which Karen appears to struggle. It is, of course, her desire to see Leopold again which precipitates the novel's action, but this reunion does not take place within the narrative, and in the novel's final moments, Ray refuses to respond to the child's hopeful question, '[w]ill my mother come tonight?' (*HP* p. 239). Karen 'dreads the past', Leopold and Mme Fisher recognize (p. 207, p. 215, p. 220). But this is a dread specifically concerned with a fear of traumatic return, a dread not of the past, but of 'already experiencing' the past again, of 'already experiencing' a future act of remembering. Just as Leopold taunts Henrietta with the threat of remembering the trauma of her mother's death, the dread of remembering Leopold himself tortures helpless Karen. From the moment Karen expects Leopold, she denies the remains of her affair while her uncertain tone expects the horror of remembering: '[n]o, there is nothing *to* regret. I mean, there is nothing left now, is there, nothing?' (p. 164). For Karen and for Leopold, the novel is a narrative of expectation, but for her, it is also a narrative of its denial. Her wish, in the 'unspoken dialogue'

---

[167] Freud describes the 'compulsion to repeat' earlier traumas, in dream, in memory, or in reality, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and argues that this arises, in part, from the need to mourn, or to work through the trauma ('Beyond the Pleasure Principle', pp. 240-41).

between she and her husband, 'to be back where we started', is to return to a time prior to the traumatic past, the remains of which she would in future dread (*HP* p. 216).[168]

> SHE: [...] I don't remember. I never remember. It's time you stopped. [...] I want to be alone with you. Stop remembering.
> HE: It is you who remember.
> SHE: All I want is for us to be alone.
> HE: We are not alone: there is Leopold. [...] [W]e are never alone, while you're dreading him. It is you who remember. If he were here with us, he'd be simply a child, either in or out of the room. While he is a dread of yours, he is everywhere. [...]
> SHE: Stop feeding on my experience. (*HP* pp. 216-17)

Karen's refusal to acknowledge the past, to consign memory as she had consigned Leopold, also figures the Freudian compulsion to repeat, a cycle she imposes upon Leopold when she repeats her abandonment of him, and a cycle Ray seeks to work through by arranging their reunion. Yet Karen accuses Ray of appropriating her trauma, of 'feeding on my experience'. Parasitic, Ray, like Leopold, illicitly reads her past. The two of them feed on her remains, on the 'violets she had pinned on for Leopold pressed dead between her breast and the bed', on her 'deadly [quiet]' voice, and on the 'dead child' whose birth precipitated Karen's decision to have Leopold adopted (p. 205, p. 215). The compulsion of Karen and Ray to repeat this 'circular' dialogue suggests that this cycle of remembering 'has no end' (p. 218). If this dialogue resurfaces 'when you least expect' – when you least dread – Karen must always be on her guard against Ray's remembering (p. 218). But in doing so, as Ray points out, Karen herself remembers. To dread and to cease to dread the past thus presents a double-bind in this novel, for both permit trauma to resurface.

---

[168] Ellmann describes this as a 'telepathic dialogue' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 124).

It is, then, the traumatic remains of Karen's lies, Karen's secrets, which structure the novel. She, like her son, practices illegal reading activity; feeling like 'a thief in her own house', in a kind of act of 'thought-reading' which foreshadows and, in the temporal multiplicity of this novel, echoes Leopold's, Karen reads the remains of her mother's lie in order to read her own secret (*HP* p. 170).[169] In what I think is one of the most important moments in the novel, given as the second epigraph to this chapter, Karen returns from a secret weekend with Max. Her mother asks with whom she had stayed; Karen, lying, tells her that she had stayed with a friend, Evelyn, but after her mother has gone to bed, discovers the reason for her unexplained behaviour. Gradually, Karen reads the remains of her own lie between the lines of her mother's reminder, a note which insists on reminding her, on putting in Karen's mind, and in her hand, her own secret. (Mme Fisher's request that Mrs Michaelis tell Karen 'that she is in my mind often', is a similarly threatening 'reminder' [*HP* p. 130].) In the ghost of her mother's lie, Karen reads the textual remains of her own secret. Karen's lie: remains. And in these compounding traces – Karen traces over the trace of writing, the trace of her lie – to use Royle's words, 'remains are always and only the remains of remains, just as there are always and only traces of traces'.[170] Everything we read: remains.

Mrs Michaelis' note might then be seen to parallel Leopold's conception for both are acts which produce traces and which give away the secret affair. Mrs Michaelis' writing performs an act which her upbringing does not permit her; that is, it allows her to confront her daughter with her lie. Julian Wolfreys comments

---

[169] 'Karen lies to her mother, who lies, in a different sense, by refusing to acknowledge that she knows she has been lied to: her silence becomes the betrayal of any future trust between herself and her daughter' (Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 91).
[170] Royle, *After Derrida*, p. 61.

on Cixous's phrase, '[e]verything we read: remains', that it 'simultaneously keeps its secrets and reveals them, placing them in plain view, in the light of day'.[171] And in a similar way, Mrs Michaelis' text not only enacts the secrets which haunt *The House in Paris*, but also, I think, the very secrecy of literature, what Derrida describes as 'the right to say everything or to say without saying, and thus the right to the secret displayed as such'.[172] Mrs Michaelis' note, I suggest, is the site of the novel's ghosts – here lives the secret of her lie and of Karen's lie. In this way, the note figures the textual remains of Leopold, the novel's secret, and therefore its ghost. And in the sense that Leopold and Henrietta spend almost all of the narrative in the room in which Max had committed suicide, and that Max does not leave a suicide note, but does leave his unborn son, and that Max might then be said to haunt the present in the form of his son, these multiple traces mean that Leopold might also be seen to be the site of, and in the site of, another ghost: his father. Leopold is the textual trace Mrs Michaelis at once leaves and does not leave, just as he is the bruising mark on the grass left and yet not left by Karen and Max's 'unexploring, consenting touch', and the ghostly effect of Henrietta's palm print on the table (*HP* p. 120).[173] Leopold is the narrative's secret, he is what is simultaneously hidden and revealed by these textual remains. In these compounding acts of spectral reading, then, Leopold seeks to shatter the 'husk of silence' that surrounds his existence, to trace the remains of his mother's lie and thus to reveal her secret: himself (*HP* p. 219). 'Here I remain', as Cixous has it,

---

[171] Julian Wolfreys, *Readings: Acts of Close Reading in Literary Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 32.

[172] Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. by Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries (2002; repr. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 163. See also my discussion of this in Chapter Eight.

[173] Ellmann notes that the mark on the grass echoes Henrietta's misted palm print (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 122).

'here I am a remains'. Leopold does 'things with words' in order to memorialize himself, to remove himself from a site of forgetting in which that trace of his birth, and of his birth name, is consigned to secrecy.[174]

> 'Her name's Forrestier.' [...]
> 'Then why are you Grant Moody?'
> 'Because no one knows I'm born.' (*HP* p. 59)

Leopold seeks to overcome his uncertain figuration as 'remains' by insisting on his presence – that he remains. In these processes of reading remains and in the revelation of secrets, both Karen and Leopold make Leopold known; they read Leopold, an illegitimate inscription, into being.

***

To read *Friends and Relations* is also to read remains. In *Bowen's Court*, Bowen asks: 'does vacuum fill the life one has not chosen to live?'[175] In the second part of this chapter, I want to think about the operation of that unlived life in Bowen's often overlooked novel *Friends and Relations*, and to suggest that this text is haunted, in a sense, not by a vacuum but by a familiar, by the remains of an alternative narrative plot that threatens to disrupt the present. To read *Friends and Relations*, I suggest, is to read the remains of an alternative text. In other words, the narrative we read is haunted by another story, a parallel tale invisibly played out through its textual trace: *Friends and Relations*.[176]

---

[174] 'Putting things in words', J. Hillis Miller states, 'is an act of memory. It is narration as memorial in the sense of a preservative gathering or "recollection." In that word "recollection" memory and "thing" converge in a doing of things with words' (*The Ethics of Reading: Kant, De Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin*, The Wellek Library Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 105).

[175] Bowen, *Bowen's Court*, p. 444.

[176] Corcoran makes note of the letter written by Lady Elfrida to Mrs Studdart (he mistakenly identifies this as a letter from Mrs Studdart to Janet), 'in which the half-sentence which she violently scratches out would have shown how much she understands of her daughter's [sic] true feelings' (*The Enforced Return*, p. 2; see *FR* p. 16). This deleted knowledge, I suggest, might be seen as another textual trace of secrets.

Bowen's third novel also adopts a tripartite structure; the first section, 'Edward and Rodney', opens on the morning of Laurel and Edward's wedding, the 'Tilney-Studdart wedding', and on the steady rain which rouses in the 'bride's relations', and in the reader, 'a sense of doom' (*FR* p. 7). Nevertheless, the happy couple depart for their honeymoon unscathed, and before their return, Laurel's sister, Janet, has also become engaged, to Rodney Meggatt. Yet 'a cruel obstacle' appears: Rodney, rather unfortunately, is discovered to be the nephew of Considine Meggatt, the 'co-respondent' of Edward's mother, Lady Elfrida, in her divorce from Edward's father (p. 15, p. 16). A fuss made by Edward leads to the brief breaking of this engagement, but the couple are reconciled, and the section concludes with Janet and Rodney's marriage. The second and third sections, 'The Fine Week' and 'Wednesday', take place ten years later; three children – Anna and Simon Tilney, and Hermione Meggatt – have been produced, and the families live more or less harmoniously in London (the Tilneys) and at Batts (the Meggatts' country home). However, the presence of Lady Elfrida and Considine at Batts during the time at which Anna and Simon are staying upsets Edward, who arrives, 'without warning, furious, in a fly, without a suitcase, to take away his children who were being corrupted' (p. 91). In the wake of this scandal, on one seemingly endless Wednesday, Edward and Janet impotently attempt to ignite an affair, a 'large non-occurrence' which Corcoran calls 'the novel's partially obscured plot of unrealized adultery' (*FR* p. 144).[177] Nothing happens, and each returns to their family.

---

[177] Corcoran, *The Enforced Return*, p. 2.

The many clocks of Bowen's fiction are perhaps most remarkable in *Friends and Relations*. Laurel's 'cupidy clock', with a 'heart on its pendulum', literally beats time, while Janet's 'loud clocks' invade the quietude of her country house (*FR* p. 51, p. 121). However, the clocks of *Friends and Relations* are 'imperfectly synchronized, deepening the moment' (p. 146). Time, in this novel, seems to proceed on two planes, one the present narrative, the other a 'deepen[ed]' narrative in which Edward and Janet marry; the 'two clocks' which the latter 'allowed [...] to tick' when Edward attempts to break her engagement to Rodney might be seen to measure these two alternative narrative paths (p. 46). Indeed, as he waits for Janet, Edward's mind is itself 'no more than a clock where each minute struck like a little hour, with such a reverberation among his senses that the hum of the restaurant was retarded [...]. This clang of over-charged minutes pointed the irony of those years. . . .' (p. 113). The time they have together, the stolen time of the relationship that should have been, is marked, in Edward's mind, on its own scale. The present is paused, 'retarded', while the 'over-charged minutes' not only carry the significance of Edward's wait, but foreshadow the 'over-draft' Janet feels she has on time (p. 129). Their time is extra, extraneous to the narrative present, borrowed from that other temporal plane, that other narrative which ghosts this novel.

The present in this novel, I suggest, appears as a protracted mistake; it is as if the characters persist in living lives that should not have been lived. The obsession with the possibility of an alternative narrative which so haunts and disrupts the novelistic present can be traced to the illicit affair of Lady Elfrida and Considine. It is the memory or remains of Elfrida and Considine's passion which

infects the younger generation with a desire for the same, as Laurel recognizes. Like *The House in Paris*, then, *Friends and Relations* is a novel concerned with the after-effects of adultery, with what remains of a foundational trauma, 'the old branching sin like the fatal apple-tree' (*FR* p. 99).[178] Anna and Hermione, for example, seem to have each been born to the wrong parents: the former 'was fair, like Laurel, and would have been a suitable daughter for Rodney', while Hermione is '[a] preposterous child for Janet' (*FR* p. 53, p. 59).[179] To read the traces of an alternative genealogy in these girls is to recognize the novel's familiar, to read the narrative that should have been. Moreover, while the novel's conclusion appears to seek a return to the narrative fork in the road, as it were, and to reconstruct the Studdart family of Laurel and Janet's girlhood, it seems to me possible that this conclusion is, rather, a penetration to the novel's parallel narrative. Laurel's regressive behaviour during these final visits to her parents' home forms an undoing of what we know of her experience in the novel: when she returns home it is as if '[s]he has never been away' (*FR* p. 151):

> Laurel Tilney's coming occasioned far more disturbance. [...]
>
> Her old room, her white-painted bed should have seemed very narrow. Once or twice Mrs Studdart looked in, very late, to find Laurel curled up on her side, staring at the shell-shadow the electric light shade always cast on the ceiling. [...] In the darkness there was a movement, as though Laurel held her arms out, as though she were nine years old. Her mother continued: 'Does Anna stare at the light?'
>
> 'Anna?'
>
> Yes, her coming again and again occasioned disturbance; it was like a birth in the house. She affected the very clocks; nothing seemed quite in order. [...] They had married her well, properly, formally, with a marquee; but they had not, somehow, married her *off*. She remained. [...] In talk, Mrs Studdart again and again felt it proper to pick up Laurel's life, like a

---

[178] See also Brooke, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 15.

[179] Simon, unlike the two girls, 'could be left out of any discussion, he was a pure Studdart with a square head like his grandfather's' (*FR* p. 58). See also Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 88.

> piece of unfinished sewing, and hand it back to her. Had she mislaid the pattern? (pp. 148-50)

Laurel is like a ghost that cannot be exorcized: '[s]he remained'. She repeatedly abandons her life as a Tilney, leaving it 'like a piece of unfinished sewing', in order to take up the life it seems she should have had. The temporal 'disturbance[s]' her visits bring about, 'affect[ing] the very clocks', are 'like a birth' – like another life, a life of which the 'pattern' had been 'mislaid'. Most importantly, however, Laurel here forgets her daughter, product of a marriage that should not have been. Anna's existence, part of the trauma of Laurel's mislived life, is forgotten; or rather, Laurel is unable to remember Anna because she exists only on the narrative plane of *Friends and Relations*, while Laurel here inhabits the spectral plane of her unlived life.[180] It is as if Laurel's identity has suffered a temporal split, embodying those 'imperfectly synchronized' clocks that echo throughout her home: while one Laurel drove away to begin her married life, 'a frightful mistake', and 'never once looked round', another Laurel spectrally 'remained' at Corunna Lodge (*FR* pp. 110-11, p. 123, p. 150). Laurel does not desire to return within the context of her present life; rather, she wishes to reject 'her now so ghostly present' for life, for reality as it should have been. In this way, the two planes of the novel are formed – the narrative and its familiar, the life of order and the 'patch of ghostly new carpet' that threatens to disturb it (p. 121).

The evening on which Edward and Janet share their illicit rendezvous represents one of the temporal folds of traumatic recognition which bring together these two planes of the novel. However, it is Laurel and, moreover, Anna,

---

[180] The way in which Laurel holds her arms out to her mother also recalls the Hermione's physical yearning for Janet: 'Hermione's face came up in the dark, her arms, her whole body' (*FR* p. 60).

helplessly awaiting Edward's return, who recognize this transgression not only of the Tilney's marriage, but, I suggest, of time itself:

> At half-past four – by the stroke of three clocks imperfectly synchronized, so that the moment was in itself protracted, deformed – Laurel ceased to expect him. [...] After this no more clocks struck, something had died down somewhere or been arrested. She rang up the exchange to hear a voice, to be told the time. This verified the solidity of the hour. [...]
>
> Anna suddenly asked: 'You are speaking the truth, aren't you?' Drawing sharply away, scarlet, she said: '*Has he been arrested*?' (pp. 133-34)

Here, the narrative and its familiar overlap; indeed, they might almost be seen to interrupt one another. Such overlaps make us privy to the novel's disjointed time, and to the traumatic realization of transgressions which mutate time, make it 'protracted, deformed', and beyond the scope of a single linear plane. Derrida suggests, in *A Taste for the Secret*, that such 'time "out of joint" is time outside itself, beside itself, unhinged; it is not gathered together in its place, in its present'.[181] In seeking a romantic meeting with Janet, and thus playing out a part of the novel's spectral plot (that is, Janet and Edward's marriage), Edward 'disorder[s]' and 'corrupt[s]' the temporality of *Friends and Relations*. While Laurel suspects that her husband's absence might be explained by such disjuncture, it is Anna who voices the criminality of Edward's behaviour: '[*h*]*as he been arrested*?' Indeed, the question of his arrest is not only in relation to the law, but also to time. It is midnight when Edward and Janet part, a liminal moment of arrest, neither Tuesday nor Wednesday (*FR* p. 128). Having transgressed the temporal (and moral) boundaries of the life he chose when he married Laurel, Edward is conceived of as arrested: '[t]here was, all at once, nowhere for Edward to go; he felt too old for his world; he had graduated' (p.

---

[181] Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, trans. and ed. by Giacomo Donis, ed. by David Webb (1997; repr. Cambridge: Polity, 2001), p. 6.

124). Criminal, 'disorderly', he no longer adheres to the temporal structure of *Friends and Relations*, but has 'nowhere [...] [else] to go'. Thus, he remains arrested, stilled between the two narrative planes, between the two sisters.[182] It might be seen that this terrifying arrest is foreshadowed by Hermione's nightmare: 'I had a frightful dream; I dreamed I was nowhere' (*FR* p. 104). For Hermione to dream she is 'nowhere' is to imagine the alternative life in which she did not exist – traumatic thought of absence for a child. To implore her mother to 'go on holding me tight, don't go; I wish we were the same person!' is, then, not only a desire for pre-Oedipal symbiosis, as Elizabeth Cullingford posits, but a desire to overcome the possibility of her mother's solitary slippage into an alternative life, a threatening spectre that invades even the child's psyche (*FR* p. 104).[183]

This sense of a temporal and narrative multiplicity is also made manifest through the way in which characters are thought to haunt other spaces; it as if, we, like Lady Elfrida, have 'always been seeing something over [Laurel's] shoulder' (*FR* p. 123). At another of these temporal folds – Janet and Edward's discussion of the fatal letter sent by Theodora Thirdman, which has occasioned his urgent visit – the very room in which they stand is 'now empty of Janet and Edward, as though both had turned and gone out by different doors, or had never come in' (p. 87). As the memory of their early secret passion is raised, their very presence in the present is made impossible. It is as if they 'had never come in', never had occasion for this interview, never continued on their mistaken narrative paths. Similarly, Rodney is plagued by anxiety when Janet is away from him: '[h]er

---

[182] Ellmann also makes note of Janet's stillness elsewhere in the novel, and argues that '[s]ince Janet is secretly in love with Edward, her stillness suggests that the impasse of this romance has condemned her to a form of living death' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 88).
[183] Cullingford, 'Something Else', p. 294.

absences, which he would hardly admit as absences, penetrated and racked him. Before death she had ghosts all over the house; she was preceded and followed' (p. 52). For Rodney, Janet herself is multiplied, or rather, shadowed, by a disjointed or disordered self. She exists both before and after herself. What frightens Rodney, it seems, is the possibility that Janet might leave their marriage, that she might choose her alternative narrative. He, like Laurel, becomes aware of the spectre of this other temporal plane, and sees this hauntedness in a multiplicity of Janet herself. Similarly, Laurel sees Edward out of time, as someone who should be elsewhere, but who is briefly, illicitly, present,

> . . . as though Edward were someone to whom she had already said good-bye, who had left her then slipped back for something forgotten; someone in haste, unwilling to be detained, impossible to accost, so that she must only secretly watch through the crack of a door or over the banisters his ghostly coming and going. (p. 125)

Indeed, this might be seen to account for the entire narrative, for as I have argued, Edward *should* be not only in another place, but in another time. It is Rodney and Laurel then, rather than Edward and Janet, who are able to see that 'the time is out of joint', and that the present, here, is always haunted by the familiar of its alternative plot, a plot that impotently threatens to 'crack [...] the crust of life' (*HP* p. 127).[184]

In the most eerie of these temporal disjunctions, this 'duality' is disturbed by a spectral third sister, ghostly intermediary between Laurel and Janet (*FR* p. 117):

---

[184] Brooke makes a similar observation: '[t]he smooth, carefully-preserved surface of life cracks, heaves – for a moment the abyss yawns at our feet: but only for a moment – for Miss Bowen is writing of civilized people, and writing of them, moreover, in terms of (almost) drawing-room comedy' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 15-16).

> These weeks, a grotesque, not quite impossible figure, had come to interpose between herself and Laurel. A woman, an unborn shameful sister, travestying their two natures, enemy to them both. [...] Where had the three met, how did the two, innocent, recognize the third? We know *of* her, we do not know her. [...] Laurel once said: 'Do you notice, it's always the same woman whose letters are read in court?' This ever-presence in profile had, for each of the sisters, the Egyptian effective defect: from Janet's side or from Laurel's – could either have seen her, she was so close, or, faced her, she was so dreadful – two eyes were visible, focussed elsewhere with an undeviating intentness. The look directed upon Edward its whole darkness. (pp. 116-17)

This 'grotesque [...] figure', I suggest, is the spectre of Laurel and Janet's other lives, the 'unborn' woman each might have been, the witness 'in court' to 'shameful' narrative and moral transgression: their unborn family, their unborn relation, their dark familiar. A similar spectre is also present to Mrs Studdart, who 'had a confidante, an intimate always present, who did not exist. A lady. [...] In fact, a kind of sublime Mrs Studdart' (p. 150). But the description of this figure as 'the third' tempts a link with Theodora Thirdman, she who harbours homosexual desires for Janet, and whose meddling letter brings about what might have been the fall of the two houses.[185] It is Theodora's letter which is read aloud by Janet as evidence for Edward's removal of his children, Theodora's letter which prompts Laurel's realization of the love harboured by Edward and Janet. It is Theodora's letter, then, which brings about the overlap of the novel and its familiar. I suggest it is possible to see this third figure as a kind of Medusa whose 'dreadful' gaze is

---

[185] Several critics have discussed the significance of Theodora Thirdman's name in relation to her textual position; for example, Cullingford and Renée C. Hoogland both identify her name as a reference to female homosexuality and the 'third sex' (Cullingford, 'Something Else', p. 298; Hoogland, 'Elizabeth Bowen: Unconscious Undertows: Queer Perspectives on *Friends and Relations*', in *Recharting the Thirties*, ed. by Patrick J. Quinn (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1996), pp. 82-101 (pp. 88-89)). Ellmann, moreover, reads the novel in terms of the 'circuit[s] of desire' she sees throughout Bowen's work, and suggests that in *Friends and Relations*, 'marriage is endangered not only by the rogue third presence, but by half a dozen spectres of adultery. The result is an impasse in which no love affair gets off the ground, and the star-crossed lovers end up tamed into friends and relations' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 72, p. 87).

'directed upon Edward', if not as a rival for Janet's affection, then as a representation of the novel's hinge, the one whose marital error divides the narrative. Edward's 'arrest', then, might be seen as a result of the Medusa's deadly stare, as he wavers between the two sisters, between the novel's two narrative planes, and is caught by their unnamed third. All of the Studdart women, then, are shadowed by a familiar, a kind of omniscient friend or relation that I suggest is a figure of the doubled narrative. That is, if, as I have argued, the novel itself is haunted, then it follows that each character may be split into a present-self, and its shadow, the remains of a self-that-might-have-been. It is this self-that-might-have-been which figures the haunting familiar of the Studdart women, and indeed, of *Friends and Relations* itself.

***

> Karen suddenly, but with intense calm, took Max's letter to Naomi from her pocket, read the address then tore it across four times. [...] She glanced once at the water, but scattered the scraps on the wet grass, where they lay like the broken trail of a paper chase. (*HP* p. 164)
>
> [Janet] still had the letter; she looked from the letter into the fireplace, but there was nothing but cold, stacked logs. So more or less absently and without ostentation she tore and re-tore the letter across. (*FR* p. 89)

In both *The House in Paris* and *Friends and Relations*, the textual traces of adultery are destroyed: the letter of confession Max composes to Naomi is torn and scattered by Karen, marking the grass as their transgressive hands had done, while Theodora's meddling revelation to Laurel is shredded by Janet. This repetition of textual destruction acknowledges the power of writing to reveal secrets. But to tear a textual revelation does not erase the secret; on the contrary, it remains, like those unwinding words in the dark. In these novels, 'everything we read: remains'; everything we read is the remains of those shredded secrets. In this

way, *The House in Paris* and *Friends and Relations* appear to anticipate, to think through, and perhaps, to ghost Cixous's and Derrida's question of remains in terms of their engagement with trauma and identity. These novels complicate and extend our understanding of the intersections between trauma, secrecy, and spectrality in narrative, as well as, and I think most importantly, our understanding of reading itself.

4

Death Sleep:

The Death of the Heart

> I've heard [*The Death of the Heart*], for instance, called a tragedy of adolescence. I never thought of it that way when I wrote it and I must say I still don't see it in that way now. The one adolescent character in it, the young girl Portia seems to me to be less tragic than the others. She at least, has a hope, and she hasn't atrophied. The book is really a study, it might be presumptuous of me to call it a tragedy of atrophy, not of death so much as of death sleep. And the function of Portia in the story is to be the awake one, in a sense therefore she was a required character. She imparts meaning rather than carries meaning.[186]

> To remember can be at times no more than a cold duty, for we remember only in the limited way that is bearable. We observe small rites, but we defend ourselves against that terrible memory that is stronger than will. We defend ourselves from the rooms, the scenes, the objects that make for hallucination, that make the senses start up and fasten upon a ghost. We desert those who desert us; we cannot afford to suffer; we must live how we can. (*DH* pp. 190-91)

The Death of the Heart is pitched on the threshold of the Second World War; it is a novel of inflexible middle-class manners and sensibilities soon to be shattered.[187] Stilled, atrophied, the novel's slumbering pre-war London is haunted by an uncanny sense of its traumatic future. In this chapter, I want to think about how we might read *The Death of the Heart* as a study of sleep as a psychophysiological and as a sociological response to trauma – as an exploration of 'atrophy, not of death so much as of death sleep'. In this novel, 'death sleep' becomes a typically strange and Bowenesque metaphor for anaesthetizing oneself

---

[186] Bowen, 'Elizabeth Bowen and Jocelyn Brooke in Conversation', p. 7.
[187] Lee sees *The Death of the Heart* as a novel that 'ironically exposes the inauthenticity of the English middle classes' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 104).

to the past. *The Death of the Heart* suggests that to allow a part of the self to atrophy, to become numb, to go to sleep, is the only way one can go on living after trauma. As Eddie and St Quentin tell the adolescent Portia Quayne, 'I've started to live in one way, because that's been the only way I can live', and '[y]ou ought to want some key to why people do what they do. [...] What makes you think us wicked is simply our little way of keeping ourselves going' (*DH* p. 331, p. 359). Atrophy, in this text, comes to imply an inability to cope with the traumatic event and integrate it into conscious thought. The 'key to why people do what they do' is the key to the past, to those traumatic events and experiences locked away, put to sleep, in order for the self to survive. That which innocent Portia sees as falsehood is rather a protective layer for the traumatized psyche. Drawing on work by Caruth and by Rose, in relation to Freud's work on dreams, sleep, and awakening, in this chapter I want to think about the dream-work of *The Death of the Heart* and of Bowen's short story, 'The Apple Tree', and to consider then the ways in which this might contribute to our ideas about the unconscious and the memory of trauma, and moreover, about the relationship between trauma and survival.

In Freud's work, Rose points out, death and sleep 'appear as vanishing points of psychoanalysis'.[188] She argues that at such points, 'Freud appears to be telling, or rather showing, us that there are places in our mind and in our histories – in the histories he lived through – which even the idea of the unconscious is insufficient to grasp'.[189] Sleep and death in Bowen's work might be seen to point to a similar slipperiness with regard to the traumas of 'our mind and [...] our

---

[188] Jacqueline Rose, *On Not Being Able to Sleep: Psychoanalysis and the Modern World* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2003), p. 8.
[189] Idem.

histories'. Indeed, in *The Death of the Heart*, death, sleep and dreams edge towards that ungraspable space of trauma outside 'the real', and outside the realist text. The unknowability of death and sleep Rose notes in Freud's work may be tracked in *The Death of the Heart* through Matchett's reverence for her evening rituals, as she 'served the idea of sleep with a series of little ceremonials' (*DH* p. 90).[190] Matchett is so 'in awe of approaching sleep' that she is reluctant even to acknowledge her own need to sleep or to show fatigue (*DH* p. 90).[191] By making 'a sort of altar of each bed', the 'monklike' Matchett shows her worship for sleep, 'the silent tide' (*DH* p. 24, p. 90). Moreover Bowen, Rose notes, is 'particularly apt at showing how – beyond all reason – perceptual boundaries between inner and outer worlds can break down'.[192] In this way, death sleep in this novel might be seen to mimic the liminal, or hypnagogic 'nowhere' space between sleeping and waking, between remembering and forgetting.[193] If it is true, as Rose suggests, that such '[b]arriers inside and between minds start to crumble when the world is falling apart', then the state of death sleep in *The Death of the Heart* might be seen as a traumatic anticipation of war.

In *The Death of the Heart*, sixteen-year-old orphan Portia is uprooted from the nomadic existence she had lived with her parents and forced into the structure and routine of the stylish London home of her half-brother, Thomas, and his wife, Anna. Portia becomes romantically involved with Eddie (who is never graced

---

[190] Death and sleep are often overlaid with religious significance in this novel; see Victoria Warren, '"Experience Means Nothing Till It Repeats Itself": Elizabeth Bowen's *The Death of the Heart* and Jane Austen's *Emma*', *Modern Language Studies*, 29.1 (1999), 131-54 (p. 131); and Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 122. Furthermore, the Quaynes are described as 'a holy family', and the 'close spring weather' as 'religious weather' (*DH* p. 110, p. 332).

[191] The attic, Matchett's bedroom, is 'the scene of Matchett's unmentioned sleep' (*DH* p. 382; see also p. 306).

[192] Rose, *On Not Being Able to Sleep*, p. 9.

[193] Ibid., p. 106.

with a surname), one of Anna's admirers – a situation that causes much concern, not only for Anna and Thomas, but for their housekeeper, Matchett, and their friends, Major Brutt and St Quentin Miller. When Portia's heart is ultimately broken by Eddie, and she also discovers that Anna has read her diary, she seeks solace in the bumbling Major Brutt, whom she believes to be 'the same' as her: unsettled, uncertain, dependent upon the tolerance of others more fortunate (*DH* p. 380). The girl fails to return to Windsor Terrace by the end of the novel, and the reader is left, with Portia and Matchett, suspended on the threshold of Major Brutt's hotel. But it is the ways in which Portia's adolescent imitation of the adults' psychological behaviour points up their anaesthetization which I want to examine in this chapter; in other words, I want to think about how Portia, 'the awake one', 'imparts meaning' for the death sleep of the novel's adults, and in particular, Anna.

Dwelling on the past and, especially, mourning, Anna believes, is a vice; when first confronted with a solemn and recently-orphaned Portia she is quick to remove her black garments and outward signs of loss and memorialization, and 'explained at once that mourning not only did not bring the dead back but did nobody good' (p. 49). Anna has become numb to her traumatic past – her miscarried children, the death of her mother, the loss of her lover Robert Pidgeon – and she exemplifies the narrator's observation that, '[w]e desert those who desert us; we cannot afford to suffer; we must live how we can'.[194] Anna is atrophied; she has 'set' or frozen (*DH* p. 31). Anna's forgetting, however, leaves her numb and scarred: her memory, traumatized, 'was all blurs and seams' (p. 53).

---

[194] Robert Pidgeon is a traitor who foreshadows the two Roberts and their betrayals in Bowen's next novel, *The Heat of the Day*.

The years she spent with Pidgeon are unreadable, 'closed' to her (*DH* p. 53).[195]

And it is Portia, she who 'imparts meaning', who exposes Anna's repression:

> But during the conversation about Pidgeon, Anna had felt [Portia's] dark eyes with a determined innocence steal back again and again to her face. [...] Anna felt bound up with her fear, with her secret, by that enwrapping look of Portia's: she felt mummified. (*DH* p. 58)

Anna is figured as an embalmed corpse, an already-dead body, wrapped and preserved. While for Major Brutt, Pidgeon is 'a big fly in the amber of [his] memory', stilled and stored while alive, for Anna he is the rotting secret she shrouds; she is a vessel of dead memories, laid in the pose of death sleep (p. 53). Foreshadowed by the frozen lake in Regent's Park on which the novel opens, Anna's smooth, hard surface conceals the tumult of dark waters beneath; she even speaks 'with the perfect smoothness of ice' (*DH* p. 394).[196] At the height of winter Anna, like the bear whose fur she wears, hibernates.

Like Emmeline in *To the North*, Anna is also conceived of as physically still: she is like the waxworks at Madame Tussaud's where Portia and Eddie lunch, for '[s]he could stay so still, and she so greatly disliked other people to fidget, that to fidget herself was almost an act of passion' (*DH* p. 85). However, while Emmeline's stillness, I have argued, is symptomatic of a more profound, and unconscious, psychological detachment, Anna works to maintain her condition of stillness, her death sleep, as a psychophysiological defence. For Eddie, she is 'one mass of pretence' (p. 82). Thus, for example, Anna is anxious

---

[195] For Austin, too, Anna 'harbours Pidgeon in the recesses of her mind in the same way that she has his letters secreted in a secret drawer of her desk' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 59).

[196] This novel opens with a description of this lake: '[t]hat morning's ice, no more than a brittle film, had cracked and was now floating in segments. These tapped together or, parting, left channels of dark water [...].This weather had set in; it would freeze harder tonight' (*DH* p. 3). See also Robert Coles, *Irony in the Mind's Life: Essays on Novels by James Agee, Elizabeth Bowen, and George Eliot* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), p. 111.

to assure St Quentin that she and Thomas are 'not having a scene', so that the image of her life should not slip (p. 396, p. 402). Thomas, too, acknowledges her performance when he tells her that '[i]f you were half as heartless as you make out, you would be an appallingly boring woman' (*DH* p. 318).[197] Indeed, Anna's heart is not absent, or dead, but a 'turned-in heart', rather like a 'shut-in room'; it is masked by 'that specious mystery the individual throws about himself' (*DH* p. 73).

> Having been seen at the window, having been waved to, made Anna step back instinctively. She knew how foolish a person looking out of a window appears from the outside of a house – as though waiting for something that does not happen, as though wanting something from the outside world. A face at a window for no reason is a face that should have a thumb in its mouth; there is something only-childish about it. (p. 321)

Anna's instinct is to retreat from 'the outside world'. The smooth façade of the house mirrors that of her face, a face that gives nothing away. 'A face at a window' is the 'thumb in its mouth' of the house, forlorn and vulnerable. Anna refuses to look as if she wants anything from another person, for in her experience, what one wants, or loves, one loses. Anna's mask is a means of self-protection, a shield for the vulnerable little girl, the only child she once was and, in a sense, still is.

Memory threatens Anna's anaesthetized present. If, as she is so fond of reciting, 'experience means nothing till it repeats itself', then Anna makes her experiences 'nothing', insisting that Pidgeon 'thought nothing' of her: '[n]othing really happened' (*DH* p. 322, p. 346).[198] Anna, observes Matchett, 'would rather

---

[197] Alfred McDowell argues that 'Thomas and Anna keep their real feelings carefully hidden. Anna shields her inner self even from her husband Thomas' ('*The Death of the Heart* and the Human Dilemma', *Modern Language Studies*, 8.2 (1978), 5-16 (p. 8)).

[198] See also Summers-Bremner, who notes that 'Anna certainly feels that the emptiness of her present has been born of her relationship with Robert' ('Dead Letters and Living Things', p. 79).

not have the past' (*DH* p. 101). Her experience thus becomes what St Quentin describes as '[t]hese *lacunae* in people!' until she reads the repetition of that experience in Portia (p. 330). The arrival of Portia – and, indeed, of Major Brutt ('the appendix to the finished story of Robert' [p. 343]) – forces Anna to reread the past. Portia, like Leopold in *The House in Paris*, is the trace of that shameful past which 'has to come back', the remains Anna must read (p. 99):

> Portia was not like Anna, already half-way through a woman's checked, puzzled life, a life to which the intelligence only gives a further distorted pattern. With Anna, feeling was by now unwilling, but she had more resonance. Memory enlarged and enlarged inside her an echoing, not often visited cave. Anna could remember being a child more easily and with more pleasure than she could remember being Portia's age: with her middle 'teens a cloudy phase had begun. She did not know half she remembered till a sensation touched her; she forgot to look back till these first evenings of spring. (pp. 158-59)

Anna's habit of repression is, in this passage, a function of her gender, because a 'woman's [...] life' is 'checked' and 'puzzled'. Desires are scratched out, denied, so that instead, Anna harbours inside her an enlarging, empty cave. Anna's life as a woman is 'checked' or marked by these patterns of forgetting, but it is also 'checked' or stopped short, frozen, and stifled against further growth. In 'these first evenings of spring', the 'sensation' of the past touches her through Portia's diary, rousing her repressed memories from their winter iciness. More particularly, that repression, blurring or cloudiness began in her adolescence, the time when she, like Portia, lost her mother. The diary draws Anna back to this 'cloudy phase' and forces her to reread and to relive the past (p. 322). Thus, while her observation of Portia's adolescence reminds Anna of her own, more importantly, it is her reading of Portia's diary, the event upon which the novel opens, which precipitates the narrative's action, for that reading begins to shatter

Anna's ice, her determination to make 'feeling [...] unwilling'.[199] The arrival of Portia, daughter of the 'leak[y]' Irene, disrupts the careful constructed façade of life in the house on Windsor Terrace (not least when she spills ink on the white rug of her bedroom), but also melts the 'brittle film' of Anna's icy defence (*DH* p. 3, p. 17). Indeed, as David Trotter has recognized, Anna finds the diary precisely because she is clearing up Portia's untidy bedroom – and more specifically, because Portia's failure to keep her papers, as Anna hoards her letters, locked away, makes Anna 'shake with anger – I really can't tell you why' (*DH* p. 6).[200] But this understanding of death sleep makes clear that Anna is angry because the textual space of the diary, like the *escritoire* in which it was kept, 'gush[es]', abject, over its borders of privacy, forcing a confrontation between the past and the present, and moreover, forcing Anna's confrontation of her atrophy (*DH* p. 6). In this way, it might be said to instigate Anna's final 'spilling over, the burst of tears and words, the ejaculation of the private personal grief' (p. 355). That confrontation or 'consummation' reaches its climax in the novel's final scenes, and leads Thomas to ask of Anna, '[h]ow much is the diary, how much is you?' (pp. 409-10).

It is the Quayne's housekeeper, Matchett, who recognizes that the past cannot be ignored; '[t]hose without memories', she tells Portia, 'don't know what is what' (p. 99). She thus comes to represent for Portia not only an alternative figure of maternity, but of memory, for Matchett and Portia, Anna says, 'talk about the past':

---

[199] Anna does explicitly compare Eddie's behaviour to Portia with Pidgeon's towards herself: '[d]irectly the two had gone out after tea, she had gone to this drawer with the clearly recognized intention of comparing the falseness of Pidgeon with the falseness of Eddie' (*DH* p. 322).
[200] David Trotter, *Cooking with Mud: The Idea of Mess in Nineteenth-Century Art and Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6.

> 'The past?' said Thomas. 'What do you mean? Why?'
> 'Their great mutual past – your father, naturally.'
> 'What makes you think that?'
> 'Their being so knit up. They sometimes look like each other. What other subject – except of course, love – gives people that sort of obsessed look? Talk like that is one climax the whole time. It's a trance; it's a vice; it's a sort of complete world.' (p. 408)

For Anna, remembering is akin to living in a hypnotic inner world, an unhealthy fixation or a 'vice'. To be 'obsessed' with the past, she says, is to be caught in 'a trance': a kind of death sleep. Indeed, it is precisely her insistence on a defence against the past which also figures a trance-like obsession. Moreover, just as Mr Quayne 'had got knit up with Irene in a sort of dream wood', 'knit up' in the obsession of romantic love, so too, Anna says, Portia and Matchett are 'knit up' with each other, and 'knit up' with the past, bound in a series of entrancing, hallucinatory knots (*DH* p. 19).[201] The past, she suggests, ensnares one. By contrast, Matchett and Portia demonstrate that remembering, and therefore moving between past and present, is possible. Matchett, especially, facilitates this temporal interaction. It is she who proffers the past to Portia, 'as though her body were a vaseful of memory that must not be spilt' (*DH* p. 95). And in the novel's final scene Matchett, the vessel of memory and narrator of the past, is, 'with an air of authority', the precipitant of action beyond the confines of the text (p. 418). As Lee has recognized, the novel's conclusion suggests that survival, moving forward into the future, will rely on an acknowledgement of the power of the past.[202]

***

[201] '[Mr Quayne] had got knit up with Irene in a sort of dream wood, but the last thing he wanted was to stay in that wood for ever. In his waking life he liked to be plain and solid; to be plain and solid was to be married to Mrs Quayne' (*DH* p. 19).
[202] Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 114.

Contemporary theories of traumatic memory are circumscribed by a concern with sleep and in particular, with sleep activity, like dreaming. Indeed, for Caruth, Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) is preoccupied with this connection between trauma and sleep; over and over, she says, it asks, '[*w*]*hat does it mean to sleep? And what does it mean to wish to sleep?*' and moreover, '[*w*]*hat does it mean to awaken?*'[203] To wish to sleep, Freud suggests, figures a desire to escape an unsatisfactory reality and to, in dream, fulfil a wish 'within the unconscious fantasy world of the psyche'.[204] It is this literal and metaphorical belief in sleep as a refuge upon which Portia's socialization rests. In this way, *The Death of the Heart* represents what Giuliana Giobbi calls 'the restrictive effects of environment on a girl's psyche'.[205] Indeed, no maternal figure in the novel – Anna, Matchett, Mrs Heccombe – encourages a type of sleep which, for Portia, described her life with her mother, with unity and pre-Oedipal symbiosis: 'at nights [they] had pulled their beds close together or slept in the same bed – overcoming, as far as might be, the separation of birth' (*DH* pp. 68-69). Now, when she prepares for sleep it is as if she is preparing for death, so that she lies 'in a sort of coffin of silence' (p. 105). In a room described as like a place in which a death has occurred

---

[203] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 97, p. 99. The dream to which Caruth refers occurred when a father who had fallen asleep shortly after the death of his son dreamed that the boy called to him, 'Father, don't you see I'm burning?' Upon waking he saw that the man employed to watch over his child's corpse had also fallen asleep and allowed a candle to fall and set fire to the death shroud. To continue to sleep, in this case, would enable him to remain in the presence of his son, whose voice he had never thought to hear again; to awaken, however, permitted him to rescue the real body of his child. See Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. by Joyce Crick, Oxford World's Classics (1899; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 330-32.

[204] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 97.

[205] Giuliana Giobbi, 'A Blurred Picture: Adolescent Girls Growing Up in Fanny Burney, George Eliot, Rosamond Lehmann, Elizabeth Bowen and Dacia Maraini', *Journal of European Studies*, 25.2 (1995), 141-64 (p. 143).

Portia obediently lies like a corpse, feigning sleep – indeed, feigning death sleep.[206]

> Immediately, Portia shut her eyes, set her mouth and lay stiff on the pillow, as though so much light dug into a deep wound. She felt it must be very late, past midnight: that point where the river of night flows underneath time, that point at which occurs the mysterious birth of tomorrow. The very sudden, anaesthetic white light, striped by the pleats of the shade, created a sense of sickroom emergency. As though she lay in a sickroom, her spirit retreated to a seclusion of its own. (*DH* pp. 105-106)

Portia firmly shuts her eyes, refusing the light – waking reality – that threatens to penetrate and shine upon her 'deep wound'. However, the tentative language of the passage underscores that Portia does not retreat from her trauma, but here *plays* at death sleep; by mimicking the behaviour of those around her, she demonstrates her recognition of sleep as anaesthesia or immunity. In this way, Portia attempts to fit into the stiff proprieties of this society, like Eddie, who also plays at death when he pretends to be a 'lady's fox fur' and makes 'himself look as if he had glass eyes, like a fur' (p. 150). But most importantly, Portia 'mim[es] sorrow – in fact, this immediate, this obedient prostration of her whole being was meant to hold off the worst, the full of grief, that might sweep her away' (p. 98). The performance of grief divides Portia's affect from her inner turmoil, in a way dissimilar from the totality of repression Anna adopts. Portia acknowledges her sorrow, but like a child who mimics an adult in order to learn, her imitation of Anna's immunity begins with this division of the inner and outer selves. That is, she merely goes through the motions of affect, and so partitions her traumatic memory from its outward enactment. This is the point on which the novel turns, the meaning Portia imparts upon the other characters. Portia demonstrates the

---

[206] 'Though the bed was turned down, the nightdress lying across it, the room seemed to expect nobody back. An empty room gets this look towards the end of an evening – as though the day had died alone in here' (*DH* p. 411).

process of repressing traumatic events, and highlights why those around her are the way they are. She thus 'imparts meaning'; she is the 'key' to why these characters 'do what they do'.

Indeed, it is after the trauma of Eddie's betrayal that Portia's wish to sleep, her wish for death sleep, is most overwhelming. Thus, while Portia is figured as the novel's 'awake' character, Eddie incites in her a 'desire' for sleep that approaches Anna's response to Pidgeon:

> At the very sound, on Eddie's lips, of the word, desire to sleep had spread open inside Portia like a fan. [...]
>
> Since the talk with St Quentin, the idea of betrayal had been in her, upon her, sleeping and waking, as might be one's own guilt, making her not confront any face with candour, making her dread Eddie. Being able to shut her eyes while he was in this room with her, to feel impassive marble against her cheek, made her feel in the arms of immunity – the immunity of sleep, of anaesthesia, of endless solitude, the immunity of the journey across Switzerland two days after her mother died. She saw that tree she saw when the train stopped for no reason; she saw in her nerves, equally near and distant, the wet trees out there in the park. She heard the Seale sea, then heard the silent distances of the coast.
>
> There was a pause in the drawingroom. Then Anna said: 'I wish I could just do that; I wish I were sixteen.' (pp. 336-37)

At Eddie's eerily hypnotic command to sleep, Portia feels the tug of slumber as an escape, underscoring Caruth's argument that, in Freud's work, the wish to sleep involves, in part, the desire to escape from reality. No longer performing, Portia adopts the coping mechanisms of those around her, and in particular, Anna; she has come to see sleep as an anaesthetic to the painful present, an escape from the knowledge of Eddie's betrayal that has disrupted what Ellmann describes as Portia's 'inexorable innocence'.[207] And when Portia discovers that betrayal has extended to the rest of the Windsor Terrace household, she flees to Major Brutt's hotel where, climbing into his bed, she enacts the defensive ritual of sleep:

---

[207] Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 136.

'folding her arms over [the eiderdown] tightly', she 'lock[s]' it, 'her last shelter, to her chest' (*DH* p. 390). Growing up, in *The Death of the Heart*, is paradoxical, for it does not suggest that with maturity comes an ability to adequately deal with trauma; rather, adulthood appears only to imply a greater aptitude for repression. The shedding of innocence in this novel thus occurs simultaneously to the process of atrophy. In this way, *The Death of the Heart* chronicles the death of childhood; to grow up, to become socialized, in this novel, is to become numbed or immune to the pain of the adult. The 'desire to sleep', then, does not only figure a wish for unconsciousness, but also describes the movement of Anna and Portia from desire, to sleep: from desire for Pidgeon and Eddie, to sleep or atrophy as a response to trauma. Moreover if, as Freud posits, the wish to sleep is a motive for dream, Portia's desire to sleep may be seen as a desire to dream of, or to return to the past, a site of immunity from the present, prior to the traumatic event.[208] Significantly, the places to which she returns are liminal – a paused train, the coastline; she refuses to commit to any point of certainty, and in this way becomes immune to the flow of time and space. The 'impassive marble' she rests against reassures her atrophy. Anna's stated wish to sleep – 'I wish I could just do that; I wish I were sixteen' – also figures a desire to return to a time prior to the traumatic event. For both women, then, the wish to sleep figures a wish to return to an idealized past, a liminal or 'nowhere' space of false immunity. But more than this, Anna's desire to sleep suggests that she does not recognize that she is already subject to death sleep. Indeed, to acknowledge this would be to awaken. And if it is true, as Caruth suggests, that to 'awaken is thus to bear the imperative

---

[208] '*Thus the wish to sleep must always be included among the motives for the formation of dreams, and every successful dream is a fulfilment of that wish*' (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 181).

to survive', death sleep is exposed as false survival.[209] Atrophy, living how one can, is not survival, but a performance of it, a performance exposed by the mimic, Portia.

Death sleep is also figured as a response to trauma in Bowen's short story, 'The Apple Tree', published just four years prior to *The Death of the Heart*. Myra is the new, young wife of Simon Wing, who hosts a weekend party for several of his friends. Myra's somnambulist activity disturbs several guests, who subsequently discover that the girl regularly suffers the memory or hallucination of her discovery of a school friend who committed suicide in the large apple tree of the school grounds. 'The Apple Tree' is, like *The Death of the Heart*, a narrative concerned with sleep and anaesthesia: the Wings' guests struggle against 'numbing feet and spines creeping' during a cold, dull local concert; later, Lancelot observes that 'the return to Simon of sensibility and intelligence, like circulation beginning again in a limb that had been tightly bound up, was too much for Simon' – he faints, falling unconscious to the floor.[210] Lancelot, however, cannot sleep: '[t]he very comfort of bed, the too exquisite sympathy with his body of springs and mattress, became oppressive. [...] With jealousy and nostalgia he pictured them all asleep. Mrs Wing's cheek would scarcely warm a pillow' ('AT' p. 463). The oppressive bed is, as in *The Death of the Heart*, like a swaddling coffin, Lancelot's 'jealousy and nostalgia' of his sleeping friends foreshadows Anna's envy of Portia, while the coldness of Myra's cheek likens her to a corpse; the girl, like Portia, mimics death sleep in an attempt to hold off traumatic return, as '[f]lattening among the bedclothes, she tried hard to obliterate

---

[209] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 105.
[210] Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Apple Tree' (1934), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 461-70 (p. 461, p. 465). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'AT'.

herself', and she lies with her 'eyes shut, cheek pressed to the pillow as though she were sleeping, but with her body rigid' (p. 467, p. 468).

Myra's dreams exemplify the Freudian compulsion to repeat. For Myra, sleep has become entwined with death; ever since the first night her sleep was disturbed by the discovery of her friend's suicide, the experience has been repeated. 'The strongest compulsions we feel throughout life are no more than compulsions to repeat a pattern: the pattern is not of our own device', *The Death of the Heart* asserts, in a peculiarly Freudian manner (*DH* p. 219). Myra is unable to assimilate her friend's death into her conscious thought – perhaps due to a sense of her own guilt, for she had earlier told Doria that she 'wished she was dead'('AT' p. 469). It is that guilt, Lassner suggests, 'which has stilted her development', and which means that both she (a 'mannerless, sexless child' ['AT' p. 463]) and Doria 'remain children, one in death and the other in life'.[211] Now, Myra is compelled, night after night, to repeat the traumatic discovery. She recalls:

> She and I still slept in the same room, with two others. That night – there was some moon – I saw her get up. She tied the cord of her dressing-gown – it was very thick – round her waist tightly; she looked once at me, but I pretended to be asleep. I lay – there was only a little moon – with a terrible feeling, like something tight round my throat. ('AT' p. 469)

Myra's punishment for stillness, for feigning sleep, is to be trapped in this dream, in this death sleep; sleep-walking, she behaves as if she were awake, but is caught in her own sleep, her own mind, sentenced to traumatic repetition. The 'terrible feeling' of 'something tight round [her] throat' unconsciously identifies the weapon Doria will use to take her own life, as well as figuring the recognizably

---

[211] Lassner, *A Study of the Short Fiction*, p. 50, p. 51.

frustrating atrophy and mutism of dream-reality. In the stammering parentheses of the text, again and again, Myra fails to cry out to save her friend.

This story sheds light on Portia's dream, which presents Anna, like Myra, as 'an absolute child', emotionally atrophied (p. 461). It is important to note, I think, that although Portia is frequently shown lying in bed, she is never asleep – even late at night, when she is expected to be deep in slumber, she whispers to a concerned Matchett, 'I'm awake' (*DH* p. 90). The one exception to this occurs on Portia's first night away from London, when she experiences an unusual dream, described by Heather Ingman as the 'turning-point' of the novel.[212]

> Portia dreamed she was sharing a book with a little girl. The tips of Anna's long fair hair brushed on the page: they sat up high in a window, waiting till something happened. The worst of all would be if the bell rang, and their best hope was to read to a certain point in the book. But Portia found she no longer knew how to read – she did not dare tell Anna, who kept turning pages over. She knew they must both read – so the fall of Anna's hair filled her with despair, pity, for what would have to come. The forest (there was a forest under the window) was being varnished all over: it left no way of escape. (*DH* p. 181)

In this dream, Anna never acknowledges Portia's presence; Portia, on the other hand, is shown to be hyper-aware of her surroundings. She is alert to something about to happen, unlike the young Anna who 'kept turning pages over'. Again, Anna is shown to be numb to, or shut off from, the world, while Portia is awake. Both, however, are still, waiting; they are like Rapunzel in her tower, even to the swing of Anna's 'mimosa yellow' hair (p. 182). The text also stresses the interaction of the dream world and waking reality, for Portia realizes that 'worst

---

[212] Heather Ingman, *Women's Fiction Between the Wars: Mothers, Daughters and Writing* (New York: St Martin's, 1998), p. 81. The dream of a forest recurs in Bowen's only children's book, *The Good Tiger* (1965); the tiger dreams 'he was a baby tiger once more. All round were trees, bright green trees, and the sun was hot. In his dream, the tiger knew where he was. This was the forest, his own forest. In his dream, the tiger hopped and jumped' (*The Good Tiger* (1965; repr. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), n.p.).

of all would be if the bell rang' and in this way incorporates the possibility of bells or an alarm into her dream, thus guarding her sleep by defending herself against the reality of an alarm clock waking her up.[213] Anna later touches on this desire, imagining that Portia feels a '[w]ish that someone outside would blow a whistle and make the whole thing stop', that the novel's adults would awaken, their fantastic fictions of lives thwarted (*DH* p. 409). When Portia does wake up the reader is privy to her hypnagogic state, 'the haunted outer court of the dream' (p. 182). The voices Portia awakens to, 'like whispers down the clinic corridor, or sounds in the forest still left from the dream', do not only spill across this hypnagogic boundary, but recall her earlier thought that sleep is like being in a 'sickroom' (p. 181). But it is the forest of Portia's dream which is, I think, most striking, for this forest does not only recreate the 'dream wood' of her parents' early romance, but becomes atrophied wood of the type that can be 'varnished'. This type of wood is impenetrable – 'it left no way of escape'. The dream is thus a false hope: sleep is not an escape but merely a means of postponing 'what would have to come', the inevitable plot of the narrative the girls share. The only way out of the dream is not through the window or the forest, but through a traumatic awakening. This dream is revelatory for Portia, for it not only enables her to recognize Anna's vulnerability, but awakens her to the futility of death sleep and of repressing trauma. The dream reveals to Portia the 'unknowing sorrow' Anna hides behind her curtain of hair, and the realization that Anna, too, 'sometimes, [did] not know what to do next' (p. 182, p. 270). 'Inside everyone', Portia now

---

[213] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 26.

wonders, 'is there an anxious person who stands to hesitate in an empty room?' (p. 182).

The novel's adult characters advocate a censorship which Portia at first resists, but to which she gradually learns to adhere. Her insistence upon leaving in her diary a blank page to represent those days on which she had nothing to write points up her reluctance to forget that a day had occurred, yet this empty space and the repression it signals is just as telling as anything she might choose to write. Eddie pushes her to censor him from her diary, and therefore to undertake the editing and cloaking of memory that the novel's adults carry out. St Quentin, for example, 'edits memory in order to transform reality into a tolerable fiction', and Eddie's libellous novel directly draws fiction from life.[214] Censorship, in his satirical novel, is only superficially exercised, and Eddie is (socially) punished. He suggests to Portia his inability to differentiate between life and fiction when he tells her, 'Plot – It's a revolution: it's our life. The whole pack are against us. So hide, hide everything', and '[y]es, I really do quite like Anna. But we have got to have a villain of some sort' (*DH* p. 129, p. 132). Not only does Eddie apply too little indiscretion to his writing of life, then, but he assumes that the rules of narrative are also relevant to life. Indeed, Eddie is himself a fiction, a 'pantomime' shielding a 'vacuum' (p. 82). The novelist, St Quentin, however, not only advocates a distinction between fact and fiction, but encourages Portia's textual and personal censorship:

> I should never write what had happened down. One's nature is to forget, and one ought to go by that. Memory is quite unbearable enough, but even so it leaves out quite a lot. It wouldn't let one down as gently, even, as that if it weren't more than half a fake – we remember to suit ourselves. No,

---

[214] Lassner, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 110.

> really, er, Portia, believe me: if one didn't let oneself swallow some few lies, I don't know how one would ever carry the past. [...] But a diary (if one did keep it up to date) would come much too near the mark. One ought to secrete for sometime before one begins to look back at anything. Look how reconciled to everything reminiscences are. . . . Also, suppose somebody read it? (p. 327)

St Quentin perceives that writing a diary overcomes the 'natur[al]' tendency of memory to 'forget', to 'fake', to protect. Memory, he suggests, is fiction, a varnished illusion, a dream wood. To 'secrete' such varnish, such falsity, is a defence which enables 'reconcil[iation]' and survival. Moreover, insofar as Portia's diary is the precipitant for the narrative's action, St Quentin's final question points up a concern not for the protection of its author's secrets, but for its effect upon the reader of the diary (that is, Anna), exposed to Portia's raw narration.

In *The Death of the Heart*, the coping mechanisms of the novel's adults encourage Portia's anaesthetization to trauma; her subsequent performance of grief demonstrates the beginning of her socialization and her initial movement from the free emotion of childhood to a constrained, atrophied adulthood. Although the girl attempts to remove herself from such influence, at the novel's end the adolescent Portia remains suspended in this liminal state, caught at a crossroads of alternative adult models and alternative memory practices.

5

Safe:

Wartime Short Fiction

The hallucinations in the stories are not a peril; nor are the stories studies of mental peril. The hallucinations are an unconscious, instinctive, saving resort on the part of the characters: life, mechanized by the controls of wartime, and emotionally torn and impoverished by changes, had to complete itself in *some* way.[215]

Outwardly, we were of course prepared to support the view that death is the inevitable outcome of all life, that each of us owes nature a death and must be prepared to settle the debt, in short, that death is natural, undeniable and inevitable. In reality, however, we tend to behave as though things were otherwise. We have shown the unmistakable tendency to push death aside, to eliminate it from life. We have tried to keep it deadly silent; [...] fundamentally no one believes in his own death or, which comes to the same thing: in the unconscious each of us is convinced of his immortality.[216]

The fantasy of immortality: a 'saving resort', a 'saving hallucination'.[217] Wartime illusions, Bowen suggests, compensate for an 'impoverished' reality, for the kind of 'meaner living' I discussed in my introduction. Consoling, they form an evening balm for the traumatic wounds and ruptures of the (heat of the) day. But more than this, the short stories Bowen wrote during the Second World War, published in *The Demon Lover and Other Stories* (1945) and *Look At All Those Roses and Other Stories* (1941), explore the ways in which unconscious fantasies become a site of escape from the present, in which death can no longer be kept

---

[215] Elizabeth Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover and Other Stories* (1945), in *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 94-99 (p. 96).
[216] Sigmund Freud, 'Timely Reflections on War and Death' (1915), in *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, trans. by Shaun Whiteside, The New Penguin Freud, ed. by Adam Phillips (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 169-94 (p. 183).
[217] Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 96, p. 97.

'deadly silent'. Just as Londoners were each night during the Blitz forced underground for protection, in these stories retreat into psychical recesses is necessary for survival. In order '[t]o save something' – to protect, to hoard, and to survive – civilians, like the city itself, were forced to '[contract] round [their] wounds'.[218] In this chapter I want to argue that Bowen's wartime short stories posit hallucination, or life lived within the unconscious, not as a representation of trauma, terror or sadness, but rather, of protection and safety. Whereas elsewhere in Bowen's fiction psychological detachment problematizes identity and narrative, in her wartime short fiction it figures a kind of psychical defence of these. The psychic 'savings' enable the characters of these stories to except themselves, and to be kept safe, from the traumatic reality of war.[219] 'We all lived in a state of lucid abnormality', Bowen later recalled – a state of lucid dream, living on, surviving, in the safety of an unconscious unable to imagine its own non-existence.[220] Jeslyn Medoff asserts that in Bowen's wartime fiction, 'people cope by dreaming, whether awake or asleep, of other times and of other places or by assuming a kind of fatalistic numbness or naïve blindness'.[221] However, in this chapter I will suggest that more than this, Bowen's wartime short fiction testifies to a Freudian refusal of death. Psychic retreat into the safety and, indeed, the safe

---

[218] Elizabeth Bowen, 'London, 1940' (1950), in *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 21-25 (p. 23).

[219] Escape for Bowen's wartime characters, Gill Plain has noted, may be in terms of 'a space which rejects the temporal order of war, and enables them to spiritually abscond from the physical environment of conflict. These defences against the disruptions and chaos of war leave the characters emotionally isolated and distanced from their environment, but in Bowen's work alienation is frequently presented as an essential prerequisite of survival' (*Women's Fiction of the Second World War: Gender, Power and Resistance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 122).

[220] Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 95.

[221] Jeslyn Medoff, '"There is No Elsewhere": Elizabeth Bowen's Perceptions of War', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 30 (1984), 73-81 (p. 80). See also Glen Cavaliero, *The Supernatural and English Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), p. 170.

of one's unconscious in these stories figures the imperative to 'live how one can' – figures the human desire for survival.[222]

For Derrida, the 'safe' is interchangeable with the 'crypt'; the '*inner safe*', for example, also describes the traumatic crypt.[223] As Barbara Johnson points out in her translation of the essay of the same name, *fors* is, 'in French, derived from the Latin *foris* ("outside, outdoors"), [and] is an archaic preposition meaning "except for, barring, save"'.[224] In terms of the way in which the melancholic subject psychologically incorporates the lost love object, Johnson here refers to the idea that the loved one has been lost, *save for* inside me; they are dead, absent, *except for* in my unconscious.[225] This same desire to 'push death aside' appears, I think, in Bowen's wartime short fiction, not so much as a melancholic inability to cope with loss, but rather as a manifestation of the will to survive: 'an unconscious, instinctive, saving resort'. If it is true, as Freud points out, that war fails to keep the pact of 'deadly silen[ce]', it might be seen that the wartime potential for loss and for death provokes in Bowen's short fiction a kind of incorporation of the self. That is, mortality is made explicit everywhere *save for* in the unconscious. And if, for Derrida, '[t]he crypt is the vault of a desire', then in these stories, that desire is for the survival of the self.[226] In this way, the psyche becomes a kind of safe that enables survival. Under the relentless rain of bombing,

---

[222] See also Kenney, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 66-67.
[223] See Jacques Derrida, '*Fors*: The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok', trans. by Barbara Johnson, foreword to *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonomy*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand, Theory and History of Literature, 37, ed. by Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse (1976; repr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. xi-xlviii.
[224] Barbara Johnson, Translator's Note to Derrida, '*Fors*', pp. xi-xii.
[225] For further discussion of melancholic incorporation, see Abraham and Torok, 'Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation' (1972), in Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, pp. 125-38.
[226] Derrida, '*Fors*', p. xvii.

and in the suffocating midst of an overcrowded city in which 'they would even grudge you sharing a grave', the psychic safe might also represent a desire to preserve a small space of one's own.[227] In this chapter I want to examine Bowen's wartime stories, 'impressions that stored themselves up and acquired force' until their release was commissioned.[228] In particular, 'Summer Night', 'Sunday Afternoon', and 'The Happy Autumn Fields', I will argue here, bear witness to this desire to save and to be safe.

The wartime short stories of *The Demon Lover* and *Look At All Those Roses* do not only guard against a threatening present; indeed, as Kenney has noted, even as these stories 'show, in the face of the extremity of actual catastrophe, the instinctive and great power of the human imagination to create and sustain new images of peace and immunity that allow life to go on', they also recreate 'the childhood apprehension that nothing is safe'.[229] 'The Inherited Clock' (1944), for example, is concerned with the repetition of childhood trauma during a *Second* World War. Here and elsewhere in Bowen's fiction, the metaphoric artillery of the 'past' – that is, the First World War – 'discharges its load of feeling into the anaesthetized and bewildered present'.[230] Thus the act of remembering with which the story opens ('Yes, I can see you now'), has explosive consequences for the 'anaesthetized and bewildered' Clara, who has

---

[227] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Mysterious Kôr' (1944), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 728-40 (p. 731). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'MK'.

[228] Requests for short fiction during the war, Bowen states, 'acted as releases. Each time I sat down to write a story I opened a door; and the pressure against the other side of that door must have been very great, for things – ideas, images, emotions – came through with force and rapidity, sometimes violence' (Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, pp. 94-95, p. 99).

[229] Kenney, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 65-66.

[230] Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 98.

repressed her childhood experience of the eerily named 'skeleton clock'.[231] But inheritance of the clock and of the past cannot be refused, however much Clara wishes to submit it to '[a]nnihilation' ('IC' p. 635). It falls to Clara's co-inheritor, her cousin Paul, to recognize that, '[*y*]*our* trouble seems to be that you are stuck on the past' (p. 636). In his retelling, his repetition, and his re-enactment of the traumatic event – luring Clara with the promise that she could hold a minute in her hand, he had forced the girl's finger into the cogs of the clock until it was crushed – the story demonstrates at once the compulsion to repeat an earlier trauma and suggests the shift from traumatic memory to narrative memory.[232] But even as the story's conclusion seems to suggest resolution, so that Clara is now able to 'sit with my memories', Paul's earlier perception that '[i]f you *have* forgotten, you must have some rather too good reason', makes the possibility of such resolution tenuous (p. 636, p. 640). Paul's insistence that he cannot take the clock thus figures a repetition of his 'cruel tricks' (p. 624). One is not so easily safe from trauma.

Other stories in *The Demon Lover* are more explicit about the traumatic return of the First World War; as Jordan notes, several of Bowen's characters in these stories respond 'to the dislocations and shocks of the Second World War by reliving the enduring losses of the previous world war'.[233] Thus in 'The Demon Lover' (1941), Kathleen Drover, who has briefly returned from the country to collect some items from her home in devastated London, finds a mysterious

---

[231] Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Inherited Clock' (1944), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 623-40 (p. 623). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'IC'.

[232] See Shafquat Towheed, 'Territory, Space, Modernity: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Demon Lover and Other Stories* and Wartime London', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 113-31 (p. 124).

[233] Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 133. See also Corcoran, *The Enforced Return*, p. 157.

unstamped letter, appearing to be from her first fiancé, a soldier killed in the First World War, now demanding a rendezvous. In this story, the demon is an allegory for war, as in 'the midst of one war, a relic from an earlier one that was to have been the war to end all wars, would be a ghastly symbol of endless, inescapable violence'.[234] A fear that these traumatic cycles will never end is also expressed in 'Ivy Gripped the Steps' (1945). This story is structured by the legacy of the last war, as in the midst of the Second World War Gavin, 'too young for the last war, too old for this', revisits the house at Southstone where he had stayed as the clouds of the First World War loomed:

> It was an existence mortgaged to necessity; it was an inheritance of uneasiness, tension and suspicion. [...] It was this dead weight of existence that had supplied to history not so much the violence or the futility [...] but its repetitive harshness and its power to scar. This existence had no volition, but could not stop; and its never stopping, because it could not, made history's ever stopping the less likely.[235]

In this story, the kind of 'meaner living' I discussed in my introduction has passed from impoverishment to a 'mortgaged' existence that echoes the 'debt' to nature – death – that Freud asserts we must be 'prepared to settle'. The human will to survive has become the 'dead weight of existence', an existence that has no 'volition', no will of its own, but clings to life like the tenacious and 'tomb-defying' parasitic ivy ('IGS' p. 708). Moreover, it is, paradoxically, this very tenacity that has supplied history with 'its repetitive harshness and its power to scar'; survival necessarily entails such traumatic effects. 'A Love Story: 1939'

---

[234] W.J. McCormack, 'Irish Gothic and After (1820-1945)', in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, ed. by Seamus Deane, 3 vols. (Derry: Field Day, 1991), II, pp. 831-949 (p. 840). See also Daniel V. Fraustino, 'Elizabeth Bowen's "The Demon Lover": Psychosis or Seduction?', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 17.4 (1980), 483-87 (p. 485); and Robert L. Calder, '"A More Sinister Troth": Elizabeth Bowen's "The Demon Lover" as Allegory', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 31.1 (1994), 91-97.

[235] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Ivy Gripped the Steps' (1945), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 686-711 (p. 697, p. 711). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'IGS'.

(1941), the first of Bowen's short stories explicitly situated during the Second World War, also draws on the influence of World War One. In this story, an exchange between a hotel's receptionist and a guest concerns war's reawakened presence: "'But I tell you what – Were you never in the last war?" – "I was," said Frank. "But I'm not in this one, thank God." – "Now Miss Healy thought you had some military rank –"'.[236] The outbreak of war is at first ignored by the inhabitants of the small hotel in Ireland, as the 'unheard news' of another disaster projects into an empty room ('LS' p. 497). Indeed, the war is not made explicit until some way into the story: Clifford (later claimed to be the uncanny double, the repetition, of Mrs Massey's son, 'a hero') and Polly Perry-Dunton 'had been over here on honeymoon when the war began; here they still were, because of the war', sequestering themselves from the threat, 'they stayed on here where they were hidden and easy' (p. 500, p. 501, p. 509).

In fact, throughout her wartime fiction, Bowen constructs Ireland as a space of refuge, a 'neutral island' located beyond an embattled Europe.[237] Yet, Ireland does not only appear as a physical site of neutrality, but as a psychic symbolization of safety. Thus, while in 'Sunday Afternoon', removal to Ireland represents a literal escape from the theatre of war, in 'The Happy Autumn Fields', the latest story of the three explored here, and the one most embedded in the zone of wartime, escape is a fantasy and Ireland represents a region of safety for the psyche desperate for survival. Yet, the hallucinations of these stories represent more than a yearning to escape the danger and trauma of a war-torn present: such

---

[236] Elizabeth Bowen, 'A Love Story: 1939' (1941), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 497-511 (p. 503). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'LS'.
[237] Clair Wills, *That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland During the Second World War* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007).

illusions actively seek survival. Psychical and physical Ireland is a neutral haven, a site of safety secluded from the 'zone of death'.[238] In 'Summer Night', however, Ireland too is part of the 'infected zone'.[239] Set against the backdrop of the Battle of Britain – 'An awful air battle. Destroying each other' – in this story the drone of fighter planes in the darkening sky makes a mockery of neutral Ireland's safety ('SN' p. 585). Disillusion, disappointment, and death have spread. Yet, still this story resists the admission of mortality. That is, even as 'Summer Night' draws attention to the failure of some kinds of illusion, it maintains a site of wilful survival in Vivie, she who bears the name of life.

'Summer Night' follows three narrative strands: Emma drives quickly through the Irish countryside, having left her family for the night in order to visit her lover, Robinson. Interspersed with Emma's journey are fragments of Robinson's evening, shared with two exhausting visitors, Justin Cavey, and his deaf sister, Queenie, as well as glimpses of Emma's home – of her two restless young daughters, her husband, the Major, and his anxious Aunt Fran. An atmosphere of shattered illusion, of impending danger, and of restlessness infects all three strands of the narrative: Justin and Robinson discuss the impossibility of thought under the pressure of war; Emma's daughter, Vivie, unable to sleep, runs riotously naked through the house; Aunt Fran prowls the corridors, watching for an unknown terror. Only Queenie remains calm, blissful in a private world of romantic memories. By the story's end, each of its strands has been disrupted by the encroaching threat of war, and each character has been confronted by the

---

[238] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Sunday Afternoon' (1941), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 616-22 (p. 621). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'SA'.
[239] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Summer Night' (1941), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 583-608 (p. 599). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'SN'.

failures of their own illusions, save for Queenie, on whose drift into sleep the story ends.[240]

Most critics of the tale have addressed it in terms of fairy-tales disturbed and romantic dreams shattered. Jeanette Shumaker, for example, considers the story as a binary relationship between Emma and Queenie, and their romantic illusions.[241] The latter, she argues, 'does not want to be rescued' from the dream-memory of her fairy-tale lover, locked safe in her own world, while Emma desires 'a saviour'.[242] Although the latter 'discovers that her lover can't or won't rescue her', Shumaker adds, 'she takes no steps to save herself'.[243] Emma's romantic ideals and her 'fairytale' are 'broken', but not her heart ('SN' p. 605). For Shumaker, at least, the story's conceptualization of rescue, of safety, is an illusion of romantic love. Yet, Queenie's romanticism is not, I think, so self-serving. That is, Justin perceives her silence, and moreover, her immersion in memory as a means of ensnaring and suffocating him, rather than as her own space of romantic illusion or safety:

> He was down here with Queenie this summer only because of the war, which had locked him in: duty seemed to him better than failed pleasure. [...] His holiday with his sister, his holiday in this underwater, weedy region of memory, his holiday on which, almost every day, he had to pass the doors of their old home, threatened Justin with a pressure he could not bear. He had to share with Queenie, as he shared the dolls' house meals cooked on the oil stove behind her sitting-room screen, the solitary and almost fairylike world created by her deafness. Her deafness broke down his only defence, talk. He was exposed to the odd, immune, plumbing looks she was for ever passing over his face. (p. 587)

---

[240] See Medoff, 'There is No Elsewhere', p. 76.
[241] Jeanette Shumaker, 'Bruised Boys and "Fallen" Women: The Need for Rescue in Short Stories by Elizabeth Bowen', *South Carolina Review*, 32.1 (1999), 88-98. See also Lassner, *A Study of the Short Fiction*, p. 104.
[242] Shumaker, 'Bruised Boys and "Fallen Women', p. 90, p. 92. See also Medoff, 'There is No Elsewhere', p. 75.
[243] Shumaker, 'Bruised Boys and "Fallen" Women', p. 90.

For Justin, a (forced) holiday in Ireland is synonymous with a 'holiday in this underwater, weedy region of memory': not a site of refuge, but of the choking, entangling past. His 'only defence, talk' is made useless by his sister's deafness, her 'immun[ity]'; 'exposed' to attack, his mind is 'plumb[ed]', as if Queenie seeks to dredge Justin's own 'weedy' psychical depths. And insofar as Queenie's 'sphere of silence' is not described by language – 'not a word clouded' it – her 'fairylike world' of the past cannot be narrated, for it is outside 'talk', outside the 'word' (p. 607). She thus makes talk, Justin's 'defence' against or distraction from memory and wartime trauma, futile: '[a]bove all, he was glad, for these hours or two of chatter [with Robinson], not to have to face the screen of his own mind, on which the distortion of every one of his images, the war-broken towers of Europe, constantly stood' (p. 588). The very silence of Queenie, of Ireland, and of the past, applies its own wartime pressure.

Furthermore, Queenie embodies the past, not only in terms of her continuation of Justin's childhood as she cooks for her brother 'dolls' house meals', but also in her absorption in the memory of an earlier romance. Although Jordan states that 'Queenie withdraws into the memory of a July night twenty years before', it seems to me that her vision of the past is not a refuge, but rather threatens to encroach upon the present, putting it in danger of collapse: 'Queenie saw with joy in her own mind what she could not from her place in the window see – the blue china house, with all its reflecting windows, perched on its knoll in the brilliant, fading air. They are too rare – visions of where we are' ('SN' p. 591).[244] Although it is possible that Queenie here envisions the house as it might

---

[244] Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 145.

be seen by a spectator at that moment, I suggest that in the act of remembering the house not as it is but as it was, she figures not just a spatial but a temporal survival of the past. This is reinforced by her later application of Robinson's face to that of the lover she had once walked with in the gardens:

> This was the night she knew she would find again. It had stayed living under a film of time. On just such a summer night, once only, she had walked with a lover in the demesne. [...] The subtle deaf girl had made the transposition of this nothing or everything into an everything – the delicate deaf girl that the man could not speak to and was afraid to touch. She who, then so deeply contented, kept in her senses each frond and breath of that night, never saw him again and had soon forgotten his face. That had been twenty years ago, till tonight when it was now. Tonight it was Robinson who, guided by Queenie down leaf tunnels, took the place on the stone seat by the lake. ('SN' pp. 607-608)

Queenie refuses the loss of her lover by ensuring that this one night 'stayed living under a film of time'. That night survives, safe in her memory, and enables Queenie, too, to '[stay] living', by screening the blissful past over the traumatic present. Her memory, the point on which the story concludes, thus serves as a counter-attack against this disturbed wartime night, raiding, robbing and 'plumbing' the present in order to ensure the survival of the past. And while for Aunt Fran war and death are inescapable – '[t]here is not even the past: our memories share with us the infected zone; not a memory does not lead up to this. Every moment is everywhere, it holds the war in its crystal; there is no elsewhere, no other place' – for Queenie, such temporal collapse ('it was now') is a means of living how she can ('SN' p. 599).[245] By enabling the face of her past lover to be

---

[245] The language of this passage echoes Bowen's description (written around the same time) of Bowen's Court as a wartime illusory 'picture of peace': 'Bowen's Court, in that December of 1941 in which this book was finished, still stood in its particular island of quietness, in the south of an island country not at war. [...] It was always with some qualification – most often with that of an almost undue joy – that one beheld, at Bowen's Court, the picture of peace. Looking, for instance, across the country from the steps in the evening, one thought: "*Can* pain and danger exist?" But one did think that. Why? The scene was a crystal in which, while one was looking, a shadow formed' (*Bowen's Court*, pp. 456-57).

filled by a face in the present, by making '[e]very moment [...] everywhere', Queenie disallows her lover's loss and enables his survival.

In his discussion of war and death, Freud posits that there are two central 'factors responsible for the psychical distress of those who have remained at home [...]: the disillusion that this war has provoked, and the altered attitude towards death which – like all other wars – it forces upon us'.[246] I want now to think about the 'psychical distress[es]' of 'Summer Night', and in particular, Emma's 'attitude towards death'. As the darkness of the summer night draws closer to Emma's home, she telephones to wish her family a repeated 'good night': 'I just thought I'd say good night' ('SN' p. 593). In the iterations of this phrase, however, lies, I think, a latent admission of death. Despite her effort to construct a veiling illusion, Emma's embattled 'good night' betrays her; it suggests, as Freud states, that '[d]eath can now no longer be denied; we are obliged to believe in it'.[247] 'Good night', Nicholas Royle argues, is

> . . . the epitome of the colloquial: any and everyone can say it. The phrase is so conventional, so familiar, it doesn't require a second's reflection. And yet, it belongs to the liminal, belongs without belonging, at and as the very border: has 'night' ever quite begun when one says 'good night'? Strange 'object' of a performative, when will it have begun? In particular as a so-called euphemism for 'death' ('die well,' 'happy death,' 'have a good death now'), it names the unthinkable. But this unthinkable haunts every 'good night.' 'Good night' is mad.[248]

In one way, Emma seems to seek from her husband, the Major, relic of and named by the last war, reassurance that the night is, indeed 'good', in another mutation of the phrase, '[i]t's a lovely night' ('SN' p. 593). Yet, her phone call is also an attempt to hide the 'unthinkable' that 'haunts' her 'good night' – the possibility,

---

[246] Freud, 'Timely Reflections on War and Death', p. 169.
[247] Ibid., p. 185.
[248] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 127.

that is, that she will not return – and her slippage from '[i]t's a lovely night' to '[i]t's a lovely night, isn't it?' points up her desire for her husband to maintain the illusion. Aunt Fran, however, does not play the game:

> 'What's happened?'
> 'Nothing. She rang up to say good night.'
> 'But she had said good night,' said Aunt Fran in her troubled way. 'She said good night to us when she was in the car. You remember, it was nearly night when she left. It seemed late to be starting to go so far. She had the whole afternoon, but she kept putting off, putting off. She seemed to me undecided up to the very last.' (p. 594)

Aunt Fran recognizes Emma's 'good night' as strange, a liminal phrase unable to define its limits and thus encroaching upon the night-time rituals of the house: tucking children into bed, closing and locking doors and windows. For Aunt Fran, disillusion takes the form of revelation, as she recognizes that Emma's message is tainted or haunted by guilt.[249] Emma's telephoned 'good night' penetrates the security Aunt Fran has so anxiously desired: '[s]he could begin to feel calmer now that the house was a fortress against the wakeful night' (p. 595). That is, although her 'good night' is, like Aunt Fran's prayers, ostensibly a wish for safety, for untroubled sleep, its surprising interruption of the household, as well as its unnecessary repetition, unsettles the old woman. Emma's uncertainty about when the night begins, and her inability to allow it do so – wishing for 'more time', as she does with Robinson, for with every 'good night' the night begins, in a sense, again – points up her attempt to refuse the 'unthinkable', and to keep darkness and death at bay, to 'push death aside' (p. 604). The Major's termination of the phone call on the expression of yet another '[g]ood night', and his sole performance of the household's evening rituals – for it is he alone who shuts, locks, and tucks –

---

[249] 'The theme of disillusion – a form of revelation – is clearly well suited to the short fiction form' (Clare Hanson, 'The Free Story', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 139-51 (p. 143)).

demonstrates that for him, the traumatic potential of darkness and death is best worked firmly against, and not permitted to lurk in the latent silences of unthinkability. Emma's 'good night' is haunted by the unthinkableness of 'nothing' happening, an unnamed silence that in part drives Aunt Fran's expostulation: '[i]t's never me, never me, never me! Whatever *I* see, whatever I hear it's "nothing," though the house might fall down. You keep everything back from me. [...] I am never told, never told, never told. I get the one answer, "nothing"' (p. 597). Aunt Fran refuses the illusion of safety constructed by the Major, his assertion that 'nothing' threatens the security of the house, and that 'nothing' is the reason Emma telephoned. As Aunt Fran seems to suspect, Emma's disturbing 'good night' is the '[s]omething' that has 'got in', the 'something' that 'will happen' (p. 596, p. 597). Indeed, what has 'got in' is an admission of death. After Emma's telephone call, the living room 'already felt the touch of decay; it threw lifeless reflections into the two mirrors', enclosing Aunt Fran's 'stranded', gasping body 'like some object on the bed of a pool that has run dry' ('SN' p. 594, p. 597).[250] The Major's self-assurance of his family's safety – '[h]e thought: it's all right, I locked the house' – cannot work against this infiltration ('SN' p. 597).

Justin, too, bids Robinson 'good night' in a letter to his host later that night: 'I wish you good night. Delicacy does not deter me from adding that I feel my good wish to be superfluous. I imagine that, incapable of being haunted, you are incapable of being added to' (p. 606). Justin's 'good night', haunted by the

---

[250] The Major's earlier observation of the house – 'You might have thought the room had burst into flames' – might be seen to recall the apocalyptic fate of the Irish country house in *The Last September* ('SN' p. 593). Robinson, too, underscores this (literary) memory, telling Emma, 'I know they burnt down the castle [on his demesne] years ago' (p. 604).

'unthinkable' spectre of death, should have no effect upon Robinson, who does not appear to feel the attack of Queenie-as-memory as Justin does – 'you interposed your solidity between me and what might have been the full effects of an exacerbating return' (p. 606). Yet importantly, Justin has expressed this sentiment in a letter, a missive that will not reach Robinson until the next day, at least, for the box in which he posts the note 'would not be cleared till tomorrow noon' (p. 607). Justin's 'good night' is thus saved overnight, and again becomes superfluous, its arrival too late to perform. In this way, Justin effects a deliberate negation of the expression, putting the 'unthinkable' on hold, unreceived, unthought, until the safety of the day. Similarly, the Major's repression of Emma's 'good night' to her children, telling them at first that she had telephoned to 'tell me to tell you to be good', attempts to delay her words, and then at last, to dampen their power, to make them safe or 'just': '"What did she say truly?" "Just good night"' (p. 595). 'One wants to be able to say "good night"', Royle argues. 'But how? Can one ever truly say "good night," in oneself, to oneself or to another, in the name of oneself or of another?'[251] Indeed, the Major's 'good night' to his children is always already (a repetition of) Emma's 'good night', haunted – indeed, necessitated – by her absence. When Vivie asks her father, 'but suppose she didn't come back?' she demonstrates her awareness of the 'unthinkable' present in Emma's 'good night', the possibility that she may not return, and that her mother's 'good night' may be permanent ('SN' p. 596).

Yet, for Vivie, the 'anarchy' created by an awareness of mortality even inside the illusion of security inspires life and action (p. 597). Recalling her own

---

[251] Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 126.

childhood experience of war, Bowen suggests that 'as a child brought up inside the illusion of security, I should have been dinted by the outbreak of war', but that war may have been, 'even for children, something of a release'.[252] While it is possible to read Vivie's behaviour as an imitation of her mother's desperate flight, attributed to a desire for freedom and for a life beyond the suffocation of her family duties, I want to suggest that her wild dance is an anarchic assertion of survival and release.[253] For Vivie (unlike her sister, the morbidly named 'Di'), the presence of war (the sparring bombers overhead) is vivifying. Now, the children are 'born knowing' that security is an illusion, and that every 'good night' is haunted by death, and Vivie does not keep it 'deadly silent' ('SN' p. 599). Rather than keeping death in the shadows, Vivie meets its challenge, delighting in the night, and in the chaos and disillusion of war; in a child's safe way of challenging safety, she refuses the protection of her bed and of her clothes, though she stops short of undoing the locks of the house.[254] '[I]n her skin', in only the dress of her birth, she runs free around the house, jumps on her mother's bed, and 'tattoo[s] her chest, belly and thighs with stars and snakes, red, yellow and blue' ('SN' p. 596, p. 597). It seems that Vivie draws herself as an explosion, imitating not her mother, but the sparks, clouds, and streams of light seen from her window. She at once represents the glory of both life and death, a collapsing admission of both, frolicking in that no-time after 'good night' but before sleep. Vivie thus embodies

---

[252] Elizabeth Bowen, 'A Year I Remember: 1918' (broadcast 10 March 1949), HRHRC 2.3, p. 3; original emphasis.

[253] See, for example, Edward Mitchell, 'Themes in Elizabeth Bowen's Short Stories', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 41-50 (p. 49); Shumaker, 'Bruised Boys and "Fallen" Women', p. 90; and Medoff, 'There is No Elsewhere', p. 75.

[254] 'She attempted the front door, but did not dare to touch the chain: she could not get out of the house' ('SN' p. 596). See also Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 145.

the 'new form for thinking and feeling' Justin approaches but fails to act upon (p. 589).

> For some time we have neither thought nor felt. Our faculties have slowed down without our knowing – they had stopped without our knowing! We know now. Now that there's enough death to challenge being alive we're facing it that, anyhow, we don't live. We're confronted by the impossibility *of* living – unless we can break through to something else. There's been a stop in our senses and in our faculties that's made everything round us so much dead matter – and dead matter we couldn't even displace. We can no longer express ourselves: what we say doesn't even approximate to reality; it only approximates to what's been said. [...] We've got to break through to the new form – it needs genius. We're precipitated, this moment, between genius and death. I tell you, we must have genius to live at all. (pp. 589-90)

In 'Summer Night', living 'how one can' requires a radical revision of survival; I want to suggest that it is Vivie who has the 'genius to live at all'. Vivie is, like Emma's 'good night', mad, haunted, unthinkable. The girl represents 'the far side of the nothing' for which Justin strives, beyond 'wretched identity' and thus beyond its death, the threatening nothing Aunt Fran fears (p. 591). Vivie, thus enacts a 'break through' – a 'new form' in which to live.

***

'Sunday Afternoon' explores war as an event unimaginable and inexpressible. The war can only be discussed in this environment as 'fiction'; it is distanced from reality through its positioning as an adventure story, entertainment for a Sunday afternoon. It is in this emphasis on unthinkability that 'Sunday Afternoon' continues to address the concerns of 'Summer Night'. In this story, the possibility of coherent thinking about the war, or of producing a literature of the events taking place, seems impossible. The story is set in the grounds of an Anglo-Irish Big House in late May, on an 'eternalized Sunday afternoon', and describes the teatime visit of Henry Russel, a holidaying Londoner, to his old friends in Ireland

('SA' p. 617). Henry, like Justin, is on 'holiday' from war, to what seems to be not only another place, but another time (p. 617). He is paraded by his hostess, Mrs Vesey, as a novelty, a storyteller, made to describe and justify the war and his own actions in response to it. His friends treat him almost as a specimen, a typical product of war, before safely packing him off, packing him away, early. Maria, Mrs Vesey's young niece, disturbs the comfort of the afternoon with her confrontations and desire to travel to England, but just as Vivie was protected in 'Summer Night', the adults, including Henry, do their best to keep Maria safe, and to discourage her from following him to the 'glamour' of wartime London.

Henry's audience request of him a narration of the trauma of war; from their position of safety, they demand an immediate witness. Henry is encouraged by his friends to tell his story, but the parameters placed upon him – to fit the discourse of war within Mrs Vesey's plea for safety, her request for 'nothing dreadful' – make this almost impossible (p. 616). Henry thus tells very little, in part because of such difficulties to do with telling, but also because his audience's repeated interruptions to his story demonstrate the difficulty of bridging the gap between danger and safety, between the trauma itself, and its later willed expression. This is the dilemma of the witness: how to express the limit-event in language – can the word 'shocking' approach the suffering Henry has observed?[255] As it was in 'Summer Night', the very possibility of thinking and feeling during war, of thinking or feeling 'shocked', is called into question: '[b]ut as [the bombing] does not connect with the rest of life, it is difficult, you know, to know what one feels', admits Henry; '[o]ne's feelings seem to have no language

---

255 '"Are things there as shocking as they say – are or they more shocking?" [...] Henry, in fact, was just beginning to twiddle this far-off word "shocking" round in his mind' ('SA' p. 617). The inadequacy of the word 'shocking' is also suggested in 'A Love Story' (p. 504).

for anything so preposterous. As for thoughts – ' ('SA' p. 617). The bombing, the war, 'does not connect with the rest of life' – it is compartmentalized, sheltered, kept safe from consciousness; indeed, for Henry, 'the sensations of wartime [...] locked his inside being' (p. 616). Death, in other words, 'does not connect' with, is kept secret from, life, from Henry's determination to survive. In this way, Henry participates in his friends' practice of keeping death 'deadly silent', of telling 'nothing dreadful', just as they 'deny' the 'coldness' of the May afternoon, insistently creeping over their bodies (p. 616).

For Henry's friends, death is abstract, something that happens to others – 'I should see no reason, for instance, why it should happen to me' (p. 619). All they can imagine is the loss of property. Yet for Henry, too, the possibility of annihilation is reduced to 'chance': '[i]t was by chance I was out when the place was hit. [...] But, in fact, I am very glad to remain. To exist' (p. 619). Even though he admits that such destruction 'happens to many people', he insists on chance, and emphasizes his survival. Yet 'Sunday Afternoon' may be read as a figuration of Henry's changing 'attitude towards death', for by the story's end Henry recognizes his return to London as a return to 'the zone of death' ('SA' p. 621).[256] His desire to protect Maria from the threat of death forces him to acknowledge its presence, and his longing for the past becomes a longing for naivety ('SA' p. 621).[257] Until this moment, Maria's 'whole existence has been in contradistinction' – indeed, so has his own ('SA' p. 622). Now he realizes, as Freud states, that '[p]eople are really dying, not individually now, but in large

---

[256] Freud, 'Timely Reflections on War and Death', p. 185.
[257] Henry might also be seen to wish to protect Maria from her belief that travel to London will be a kind of 'dying into life', as Bloom puts it (Introduction to Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 1-11 (p. 3)).

numbers, often tens of thousands in a single day. And it is no longer a matter of chance. [...] [A]ccumulation abolishes chance'.[258]

For Bowen, it was the end of the war, the removal of a perpetual reminder of one's own mortality that stopped her short. She recalls: 'I was terrified by the vacuum, the absolute full-stop, in my thoughts, in my being, in my soul. It seemed to me, suddenly, that I had grown up without having the capacity to feel'.[259] Her words echo Henry's, for where language should be, there is only a terrifying 'vacuum' – nothing. Here exists a double-bind, for while the trauma of war and of death is itself unthinkable, without it, thought stops. War is the only thought, and yet the thought that cannot be expressed. 'The simple way to put it was', Bowen later wrote: '"One cannot take things in." What was happening was out of all proportion to our faculties for knowing, thinking and checking up'.[260] Thus in 'Sunday Afternoon', Ronald Cuffe announces the impossibility of a literature of war:

> 'About what is important,' announced Maria, 'it seems that no one can tell one anything. There is really nothing, till one knows it oneself.'
> 'Henry is probably right,' said Ronald Cuffe, 'in considering that this – this outrage is *not* important. There is no place for it in human experience; it apparently cannot make a place of its own. It will have no literature.'
> 'Literature!' said Maria. 'One can see, Mr Cuffe, that *you* have always been safe!' ('SA' p. 618)

To even think of literature, Maria's expostulation suggests, signifies safety, for creative production can only ever belong to a higher order of a hierarchy of needs. Yet, more than this, Ronald's statement proposes that a place should not be kept for the war, as Maria keeps a place for Henry at the table, and that such an experience should not be preserved, for language cannot approach it (p. 619).

---

[258] Freud, 'Timely Reflections on War and Death', p. 185.
[259] Bowen, 'A Year I Remember', p. 18.
[260] Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 96.

Second-hand thought, literary testimony, is impossible, 'there is really nothing, till one knows it oneself'. The paradox, of course, is that Ronald and Maria are themselves elements of the literature of wartime, so that 'Sunday Afternoon' defies the claim that war trauma cannot be represented but also, as Richard Greaves has noted of wartime short fiction in general, that '[t]here is, perhaps, something paradoxical in the idea that the short story can provide a form for responses to such epic events as World Wars I and II'.[261] Henry's stops and starts, his stuttering attempt to express his life, his ambiguities, his silences, are those of the narrative. Perhaps, this text suggests, this is what literature of war, of trauma, could look like (it would, for Bowen, reach its fullest expression in her wartime novel, *The Heat of the Day*). As Deborah L. Parsons notes, these 'senses awakened to hypersensitivity [...] require experimentation in translating them into language'.[262] Stories of a disintegrated life are, like the life itself, the destroyed wartime landscape, and an insufficient language, filled with gaps. Survival of such an experience, the necessity of keeping a place for it, thus required new forms of thinking trauma, and new forms of writing trauma.

***

Survival: life's resistance against death. For Bowen, wartime survival seems to have been a collective effort, the accumulation of lives – real lives, fictional lives – shored up against 'the annihilation that was threatening it', the accumulation of

---

[261] Richard Greaves, 'Responses to War: 1914-18 and 1939-45', in *A Companion to the British and Irish Short Story*, ed. by Cheryl Alexander Malcolm and David Malcolm (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), pp. 35-50 (p. 35).
[262] Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), p. 21.

people dying.[263] Indeed, Freud points out that literature itself can be a site of 'compensation' for what I read as a Bowenesque 'meaner living':

> So we have no option but to find compensations in the world of fiction, in literature, in the theatre for that which we have lost in life. [...] In the sphere of fiction we find the plurality of lives that we need. We die in our identification with one hero, but survive him and are ready to die a second time, equally unarmed, with another.[264]

Fiction and fantasy, 'often childishly innocent', are 'compensations' for death and destruction, and one means of consolation during wartime.[265] For example, in 'Mysterious Kôr' (1944), the high-tide mark of hallucination in *The Demon Lover*, Pepita and her soldier lover, Arthur, wander the dead city streets, playing out their fantasy of the ghostly Kôr, the mystical city of Rider Haggard's novel, *She* (1886).[266] In a way similar to Queenie's projection of the blissful past onto the threatening present, Pepita reconstructs blitzed London as the fictional city of her reading childhood, thereby casting it in the safety and security of that period. Pepita and Arthur inhabit the fantasy – what John Bayley terms 'her comfort, her safe place' – and maintain the illusion of survival through their plans for procreation.[267]

In her post-war essay, 'Out of a Book', Bowen addresses this interaction between life and fiction: '[f]or the child, any real-life scene that has once been sucked into the ambiance of the story is affected, or infected, forever. [...] Such a

---

[263] Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 97.
[264] Freud, 'Timely Reflections on War and Death', p. 185.
[265] 'Dreams by night, and the fantasies – these often childishly innocent – with which formerly matter-of-fact people consoled themselves by day were compensations' (Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 96).
[266] 'Mysterious Kôr' is the final story in *The Demon Lover*, the collection in which, Bowen notes, she found 'a rising tide of hallucination' (Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 96).
[267] 'I do know what we'd do first. [...]. Populate Kôr' ('MK' p. 731); and John Bayley, *The Short Story: Henry James to Elizabeth Bowen* (Brighton: Harvester, 1988), p. 169. See also Mark Rawlinson, *British Writing of the Second World War*, Oxford English Monographs, ed. by Christopher Butler and others (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), p. 83.

thing, place or scene cannot again be walked past indifferently; it exerts a pull and sets up a tremor; and it is to indent the memory for life'.[268] The fluidity of this relationship describes the hallucinatory or supernatural aspects of Bowen's writing, especially her wartime short stories, which often arise from a consideration of what Petra Rau calls 'the fictitiousness of (wartime) reality'.[269] What Bowen terms the 'overlapping and haunting of life by fiction', begins in childhood.[270] Here, as in wartime, fiction compensates for the 'insufficiency', or impoverishment, 'of so-called real life', it fleshes out the 'otherwise constricted' life.[271] Children read sensationally, 'unthinkingly', she observes, but when such children grow up, 'it becomes an enormity, inside the full-sized body, to read without the brain'.[272] Reading 'without the brain' is to read with the body, sensuously, and on face-value – to remain innocent of reality. To read 'without the brain' is to seek consolation in fantasy, to read without knowledge, without thought, to throw oneself entirely into the world of fiction and of life outside death; in wartime, it is to leave behind the traumatic present and the recognition of death.

In that essay, Bowen is concerned, in particular, with the ways in which people console themselves with literature of the past: '[*r*]*eading is* an aid', she notes, 'and the past, lately, has proved one unfailing source – memoirs, biography,

---

[268] Elizabeth Bowen, 'Out of a Book' (1946), in *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 48-53 (p. 52).
[269] Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 95; and Petra Rau, 'The Common Frontier: Fictions of Alterity in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* and Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*', *Literature and History*, 14.1 (2005), 31-55 (p. 32). Keri Walsh suggests that '[s]tories of the London Blitz, including "The Happy Autumn Fields" and "Mysterious Kôr", are best understood as deriving their haunting effects from Bowen's merging of surrealist techniques with an Anglo-Irish Gothic tradition' ('Elizabeth Bowen, Surrealist', *Eire-Ireland*, 42.3-4 (2007), 126-47 (p. 129)).
[270] Bowen, 'Out of a Book', p. 48.
[271] Ibid, p. 49, p. 51.
[272] Ibid, p. 48, p. 50.

old diaries found in old desks, agreeable works of history, rich historical novels'.[273] Memory in, for example, 'The Happy Autumn Fields', is a site of safety.[274] Positioning the self within a psychic space preserved for safekeeping, and moreover, within a temporal space which must remain untouched by war, becomes a coping mechanism in Bowen's wartime short fiction. That is, in these stories memory becomes an escape from the present, and thereby a refusal of the possibility of death. Caruth's argument that the cause of trauma 'is a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind's experience of time', might then here suggest that trauma occurs when 'a bodily threat' overcomes psychic refuge in the past, collapsing the temporal boundaries constructed to preclude death, and thus annihilating the self 'in the mind's experience of time'.[275]

These temporal constructions founded in the reading of old documents – 'a musty old leather box gaping open with God knows what – junk, illegible letters, diaries, yellow photographs, chiefly plaster and dust' – instigate the hallucinatory action of 'The Happy Autumn Fields', a fragmented narrative which juxtaposes Mary, in the dangerous present of London in the Blitz, with her idyllic 'dream' of Sarah, in Victorian Ireland.[276] Like Queenie in 'Summer Night', Mary seeks refuge in the past. The story opens on Sarah and her family walking in the fields; abruptly, Mary, and the reader, are removed from this scene as she awakens from

---

[273] Bowen, 'The Cult of Nostalgia' (broadcast 4 August 1951), HRHRC 2.3, p. 5; original emphasis.

[274] Ellmann notes that 'The Happy Autumn Fields' 'explores these compensatory dreams of plenitude' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 169).

[275] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 61.

[276] Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Happy Autumn Fields' (1944), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 671-85 (p. 677). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'HAF'. 'There are Victorian diary entries in *Bowen's Court* which inspired "The Happy Autumn Fields"', Lee points out (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 18).

that dream with a cry.[277] After Mary's lover, Travis, urges her to leave the house, which is in danger of collapsing around her, she again falls asleep and returns to her life as Sarah, who has the hallucinatory awareness that she has been absent for some time. The story concludes when Mary awakens again, devastated that her survival of yet another bomb has precluded the possibility of her return: '[t]he one way back to the fields was barred by Mary's surviving the fall of ceiling' ('HAF' p. 683). Yet, it is also possible that her survival has been enabled by the processes of her dream: Mary has 'partaken of [her] fiction's body'.[278]

Caruth has identified this preoccupation with survival, with life rather than death, in Freud's writing on wartime trauma in, for example, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Moses and Monotheism*. '*What does it mean to survive?*' she asks, for '[i]t is only by recognizing traumatic experience as a paradoxical relation between destructiveness and survival that we can also recognize the legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience'.[279] This incomprehensibility, I suggest, is the 'unthinkable' inherent in Emma's 'good night', and in Henry's unspoken thought. Indeed, this lacuna 'between destructiveness and survival' may also be seen to represent Freud's 'deadly silen[ce]', the impossibility of thinking one's own death. It is this very gap in thought which, Freud states, war forces one to confront, for in order to think one's own survival, one has also to admit the possibility of death. Safety, it seems, can only exist in relation to an awareness of danger.

---

[277] Brad Hooper has argued that the story does not represent dream and reality, but rather that 'Bowen did in fact create dual realities, with a shared character, *not* one reality on one hand and a "saving hallucination" on the other' ('Elizabeth Bowen's "The Happy Autumn Fields": A Dream or *Not*?', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 21.2 (1984), 151-53 (p. 153)).

[278] Bowen, 'Out of a Book', p. 52.

[279] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 58, p. 60. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Moses and Monotheism*, Caruth suggests, 'represent Freud's formulation of trauma as a theory of the peculiar incomprehensibility of human survival' (p. 58).

'The Happy Autumn Fields' figures this admission as Mary's dream enacts a repeated attempt to be aware of the threat of death. I suggest that Mary's dream is an unconscious confrontation of the possibility of her death that will permit her survival. Caruth states:

> The return of the traumatic experience in the dream is not the signal of the direct experience but, rather, of the attempt to overcome the fact that it was *not* direct, to attempt to master what was never fully grasped in the first place. Not having truly known the threat of death in the past, the survivor is forced, continually, to confront it over and over again. For consciousness then, the act of survival, as the experience of trauma, is the repeated confrontation with the necessity and impossibility of grasping the threat to one's own life.[280]

While Mary, in her dream as Sarah, admits to 'the feeling of dislocation, the formless dread', she 'never fully grasp[s]', she never comprehends, to what this 'dread' is attributed ('HAF' p. 681). In the hallucinatory repetitions of this necessary and yet impossible acknowledgement of Eugene's traumatic death, Mary's psyche seeks to save her life, to make possible her survival in the threatening present, as even Travis recognizes: '[y]our own nerves know that [the house is not safe], even if you don't: [...] [y]our will keeps driving your self, but it can't be driven the whole way – it makes its own get-out: sleep' ('HAF' p. 676).[281]

Mary is what Corcoran terms 'an unexpected survivor'; her awakening to the shock of her own survival occurs only when Sarah has come to recognize the threat of death made against Eugene, as Henrietta implores her to reiterate her promise that '[w]hatever tries to come between me and Sarah becomes nothing'

---

[280] Ibid, p. 62.

[281] See also Austin, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 120; and Rod Mengham, 'British Fiction of the War', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II*, ed. by Marina MacKay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 26-42 (p. 28).

('HAF' p. 683).[282] And Sarah's silence – 'Sarah, who, as once before, could not speak' – the interrupted thought on which the Victorian narrative is disrupted and returns to the present, figures the 'unthinkable', her awareness of the threat of annihilation, and thus enables Mary's awareness of the necessity of survival. Although Mary laments the 'cruel[ty]' of her dream, it has achieved its purpose, for 'now how am I to help laying that like a pattern against the poor stuff of everything else?' ('HAF' p. 684) Although she can no longer remain in the blissful naivety of immortality, any more than she could remain in the idyll of the Irish countryside with her dear sister, Henrietta, this relinquishment enables her survival in the present.

It is, I think, possible to read Bowen's wartime short fiction as a literature of survival. Each story refuses or overcomes annihilation, consistently privileging life over death, the safety of the psyche over the danger posed to the body. These stories determine an optimism necessary for survival in a war-torn present, an ideology of safety that resists destruction. What is kept safe throughout these stories, the thought preserved, is succinctly expressed in 'London, 1940': '[i]t is a fine morning and we are still alive'.[283]

---

[282] Corcoran, *The Enforced Return*, p. 148. '[T]he trauma of the nightmare does not simply consist in the experience *within* the dream, but in *the experience of waking from it*. [...] it is not only the dream that surprises consciousness but, indeed, the very *waking itself* that constitutes the surprise' (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 64).

[283] Bowen, 'London, 1940', p. 23.

6

Unknown:

The Heat of the Day

> To know what I knew, to keep my knowing unknown, unknown all the time to be acting on it – I tell you, everything fell into place round me. (*HD* p. 307)
>
> A frightful mystery, a secret to make you tremble. [...] A secret always makes you tremble. Not simply quiver or shiver, which also happens sometimes, but tremble. [...] One doesn't know *why one trembles*. This limit to knowledge no longer only relates to the cause or unknown event, the unseen or unknown that makes us tremble. [...] Why does the irrepressible take this form?[284]

I don't know. Stella Rodney doesn't know; neither, I suspect, does Bowen. In *The Heat of the Day*, it is the unknown, and the effect of the unknown, that the narrative seeks to elucidate and construct. Indeed, *The Heat of the Day*, a text which has been described as Bowen's 'spy novel', is concerned not to expose but to perpetuate the traumatic unknown.[285] Bowen's novel of wartime London, I will argue in this chapter, textualizes trauma; it figures, in form and in content, 'the unseen or unknown that makes us tremble', as well as the trembling itself. In other words, I suggest, *The Heat of the Day* is a trembling narrative of the unknown. I have shown, in the last chapter, how Bowen's wartime short stories figure a desire to defend oneself against the danger and destruction of war through a retreat into

---

[284] Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. by David Wills (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 53, p. 55.

[285] See, for example, Corcoran, *The Enforced Return* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 187; Patrick Deer, *Culture in Camouflage: War, Empire, and Modern British Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 184; and in detail, Allan Hepburn, *Intrigue: Espionage and Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 134-65.

psychical safety. In the present chapter, however, I want to think about the ways in which Bowen's wartime novel, *The Heat of the Day*, itself enacts the permutations of the wartime known and unknown in what might be seen as a commemoration of the physical and the psychological state of Second World War London. In this chapter, then, I will suggest that *The Heat of the Day* might be seen as a trembling figuration of Bowen's (post-)trauma narratives. Moreover, in the sense that this novel was not completed until some years after the end of the Second World War, it might be seen that *The Heat of the Day* figures a trembling continuation of, or aftershock from, the traumatic event of war.[286] And, insofar as Robert Kelway finally reveals his espionage activities to be in part a consequence of his traumatic retreat in the First World War (as part of that 'army of freedom queuing up to be taken off by pleasure boats' [*HD* p. 306]), the novel's events are already a continuation of the effects of the earlier conflict.[287] Indeed, we might say this is true of all Bowen's work: her entire *oeuvre* could be read as a quaking post-traumatic event or effect. In all Bowen's writing trembles the shimmering 'heat of the day before'.[288]

Rather than seeking to overcome the uncertainty of wartime, as the stories of *The Demon Lover* may be seen to do, *The Heat of the Day* is conditioned by the

---

[286] Bowen stated that *The Heat of the Day* took 'longer to write than any other of my novels; partly because it was a good deal interrupted by what is in the main its subject, the war, and partly because so many psychological as well as technical difficulties kept cropping up in the course of it' ('Material for the *Broadsheet*' (n.d.), HRHRC 1.5, p. 1). She had drafted the first five chapters of the novel during the war, but did not attempt any further work on what was to be *The Heat of the Day* because, as 'she told Lady Tweedsmuir', reports Glendinning, 'the protracted upsets of that V.I. summer made her feel that any work she did on the novel would probably not be of high quality, would betray the strain' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 149). Glendinning makes clear the significance of noting the 'afterwardsness' of *The Heat of the Day* in the title of her chapter on this novel, 'After Noon' (pp. 148-66).

[287] See also Victoria Stewart's discussion of the repetition of World War I trauma in World War II (*Narratives of Memory: British Writing of the 1940s* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 8); and Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 7.

[288] Elizabeth Bowen, *A World of Love* (1954; repr. New York: Anchor, 2003), p. 9. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *WL*.

unknown. For Bowen to assert that the proliferating ghosts of her wartime short fiction are 'the certainties' is I suggest, to embrace, paradoxically, the certainty of the uncertain at this time.[289] But *The Heat of the Day* is concerned not with the uncertain in terms of the destabilization of wartime, but with a more absolute sense of the unknown: with the secrecy of wartime and of wartime work, and of romantic relationships; with the unknown dead, and the fear of an unknown or unrecognizable self; and above all, with the unknown trauma which 'makes us tremble'.

The Heat of the Day engages with these as literary effects; in other words, the novel performs a literature of trauma (and specifically, a literature of war). This is, in part, present in what I will read as the novel's cinematographic tension; *The Heat of the Day*, states Lee, 'is a strained and strange performance'.[290] This performativity of trauma is also, I think, signified by the narrative's complicated sentence structures (what W.J. McCormack calls an '[i]nstability of language'), which constitute a kind of a trembling or stammering, a syntactical disruption which may be read as a continuing traumatic effect or, indeed, symptom.[291] The 'queer' order of words in *The Heat of the Day*, 'the jars, "jingles" and awkwardnesses' work, Bowen wrote in a letter to her publisher, to make a 'psychological impact' – to have an effect upon the reader.[292] Language, in post-war *The Heat of the Day*, has undergone a seismic upset as a result of an event

---

[289] 'And the ghosts [...] – what part do they play? They are the certainties' (Bowen, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*, p. 98).

[290] Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 158. See also Lassner, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 122.

[291] W.J. McCormack, *Dissolute Characters: Irish Literary History Through Balzac, Sheridan Le Fanu, Yeats and Bowen* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 224.

[292] Elizabeth Bowen, letter to Daniel George (2 June 1948), HRHRC 10.4, p. 1, p. 2. Bowen also stated that she was, in this novel, 'trying to put language to what for me was a totally new use, and what, perhaps was, showed itself to be a quite impossible use' (Bowen, 'Elizabeth Bowen and Jocelyn Brooke in Conversation', p. 12).

that has already occurred.[293] In this sense, the novel's very form is always and everywhere constituted as symptomatic of the war's ongoing traumatic, tremulous effects; moreover, and perhaps more powerfully, this continuation of an unknown trembling may also be seen as an anticipation of further or repeated trauma, as an effect of repression and anxiety. I agree, then, with Lee's assertion that this novel is an example of 'strain[ed]' writing, but suggest that more than this, what is so interesting about *The Heat of the Day* is that it is, as such, an example of writing that trembles in reaction and in apprehension. As Derrida points out,

> . . . trembling, at least as a signal or symptom, is something that has already taken place, as in the case of an earthquake [*tremblement de terre*] or when one trembles all over. It is no longer preliminary even if, unsettling everything so as to imprint upon the body an irrepressible shaking, the event that makes one tremble portends and threatens still. It suggests that violence is going to break out again, that some traumatism will insist on being repeated.[294]

Derrida's earthquake as a metaphor for the repetition of trauma takes on further significance in the novel's context of the Blitz on London during 1940 and 1941, for those fifty-seven consecutive nights of bombing had sociological, physiological, psychological and narratological implications and reverberations,

---

[293] For discussion of the novel's strained syntax, see Christensen, *The Later Fiction*, p. 33, p. 81; Hepburn, *Intrigue*, p. 135; Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, pp. 164-65; Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 158; McCormack, *Dissolute Characters*, p. 224; Stewart, *Narratives of Memory*, p. 160; Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, 'Torn-Off Senses', *Angelaki*, 3.3 (1998), 153-58 (p. 154); Bernard Bergonzi, *Wartime and Aftermath: English Literature and Its Background, 1939-60*, Opus, ed. by Walter Bodmer and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 87; Angela G. Dorenkamp, '"Fall or Leap": Bowen's *The Heat of the Day*', *Critique*, 10.3 (1968), 13-21 (p. 13, p. 20); Elizabeth C. Inglesby, '"Expressive Objects": Elizabeth Bowen's Narrative Materializes', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 53.2 (2007), 306-33 (p. 310); Phyllis Lassner, 'Reimagining the Arts of War: Language and History in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* and Rose Macaulay's *The World My Wilderness*', *Perspectives on Contemporary Literature*, 14 (1988), 30-38 (p. 32); Elizabeth Maslen, *Political and Social Issues in British Women's Fiction, 1928-1968* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), p. 88; John Mepham, 'Varieties of Modernism, Varieties of Incomprehension: Patrick Hamilton and Elizabeth Bowen', in *British Fiction after Modernism: The Novel at Mid-Century*, ed. by Marina MacKay and Lyndsey Stonebridge (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 59-76 (p. 60); Barbara Bellow Watson, 'Variations on an Enigma: Elizabeth Bowen's War Novel', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 81-101 (p. 81, p. 98); and R.A. York, *The Rules of Time: Time and Rhythm in the Twentieth-Century Novel* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1999), p. 106.

[294] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, pp. 53-54.

and constituted a 'general rocking of London and one's own mind' (*HD* p. 98). Bennett and Royle have described *The Heat of the Day* as an example of 'blitz-writing'.[295] I want to suggest that the tremulous narrative might also be portrayed, in Bowen's own terms, as an 'earthquake stor[y]', a text that is an effect of, or set in shuddering motion by, a city at war: '[Stella] had left a lamp alight on the stool beside [Roderick]: the watery circle on the ceiling seemed for the moment to swell or tremble – so earthquake stories begin; but this could be only London giving one of her sleepy galvanic shudders' (*HD* p. 69).

The narrative opens, like Bowen's previous novel, *The Death of the Heart*, in Regent's Park, although its atmosphere, over a decade later (specifically, 'the first Sunday of September 1942' [p. 4]), is vastly changed; indeed, as Lee notes, to compare these scenes in the two novels which, in the corpus of Bowen's work, bracket the Second World War, is to have a 'vivid sense of what the war did to this part of London'.[296] Shattering and fragmentation has, in *The Heat of the Day*, spread beyond the icy pond of *The Death of the Heart*; Bowen notes of the 'apparent disjection between the characters and the scenes' in the later novel that she 'was aiming to give an effect of fortuity, of a smashed up pattern with its fragments invecting on one another, drifting and tapping rather like the broken ice which is described in the opening passage [of *The Death of the Heart*]'.[297] The introductory scene is one of only two in which the two strands of the novel's plot intersect (the other occurs when Harrison and Stella unexpectedly meet Louie in a café): Louie Lewis, 'a woman of about twenty-seven, with the roughened hair and still slightly upward expression of someone who has been lying flat on the grass',

---

[295] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 94.
[296] Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 107.
[297] Bowen, 'Elizabeth Bowen and Jocelyn Brooke in Conversation', p. 11.

is part of a crowd of 'shabby Londoners' and 'exiled foreigners' listening to a Viennese orchestra in the park's open-air theatre (*HD* p. 7).[298] Her appearance is catalogued in professional detail by her neighbour in the audience, the counterspy Harrison, a man whose face has 'a gate behind it', and who forms the hinge of the novel's doubled plot, the parallel stories of Louie Lewis and of Stella Rodney (*HD* p. 9). After the concert, Harrison arrives at Stella's London flat to tell her the information on which the narrative turns: that her lover, Robert, is passing secret information to the enemy, an act that has, he tells her, '[f]or a good bit of time [...] been suspected; now it's established, known' (p. 35). However, if Stella becomes his lover, Harrison slyly states, he will refrain from reporting Robert to his superiors. The novel's suspense, then, as Lee and Hoogland have both noted, derives not from its plot but rather from its psychology.[299] Stella responds to Harrison's revelation neither one way nor the other, but suspicion of Robert has been implanted: she does not tell her lover of Harrison's visit, and begins to watch him herself, noting his habits and behaviour, and suggesting a visit to his family home, Holme Dene, to look, as Harrison puts it, 'at the first place where rot could start' (*HD* p. 144).[300] 'You succeed in making a spy of me', Stella observes (*HD* p. 152). Eventually she confronts Robert and he, after some time, confesses during a lengthy discussion at Stella's flat (much of the novel, indeed, is constructed of evasive and non-committal dialogue). Convinced that he is being watched and will be arrested if he is seen leaving her home, Robert escapes through a skylight,

---

[298] The effect of the music upon the listening crowd (*HD* p. 4) echoes that of the nightingale's song in the immediate post-war of Bowen's short story, 'I Hear You Say So', a sound that is 'too much', 'too soon' (Elizabeth Bowen, 'I Hear You Say So' (1945), in *Collected Stories*, pp. 751-57 (p. 755)).

[299] Hoogland, *A Reputation in Writing*, p. 119; and Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 165.

[300] Watson argues that 'Holme Dene' 'derives from Dene-hole, a mysterious type of archaeological find, a shaft sunk in a chalk formation, widening out underground, thought to have been used as a hiding place in time of war' ('Variations on an Enigma', p. 88).

only to 'fall or leap from the roof' to his death (p. 327). Running parallel to Stella's plot is that of her working-class counterpart Louie, left alone in London after her parents are killed by a bomb, and her husband, Tom, is called up. Yet even while Louie's construction of a female community with Connie, an ARP warden, works to evoke the mythical sense of comradeship in London during the Blitz she remains lonely and promiscuous, and by the novel's conclusion Louie has given birth to an illegitimate son she names Thomas Victor, in a strange concatenation of the name of her own husband, and of Stella's.[301] The novel closes on this child born of an unknown father, and on who devolves the signification of the narrative's two unknown men. Although most critics read this conclusion as hopeful or as symbolic of survival, I want rather to think about this image of the infant, held high by his mother in the hope that 'he too might see, and perhaps remember', as a permutation of Bowen's typical 'threshold' conclusion (*HD* p. 372).[302] In this context, the physically and genealogically suspended child, vessel of the unknown dead may, like the novel itself, be read as a traumatic effect, and as a signification of the continuation of trembling into the 'thoughtless' future (*HD* p. 372).

---

[301] 'Contrary to subsequent popular myth', argues Lawrence Phillips, the Blitz revealed by novels like *The Heat of the Day* 'is neither comradely nor egalitarian' (*London Narratives: Post-War Fiction and the City*, Continuum Literary Studies (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 7).

[302] See, for example, Jordan, p. 168; Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 175; Watson, 'Variations on an Enigma', p. 83; Damon Marcel DeCoste, 'The Literary Response to the Second World War', in *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel, 1945-2000*, ed. by Brian W. Shaffer (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 3-20 (p. 16); Karen Schneider, *Loving Arms: British Women Writing the Second World War* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), p. 98. Brook Miller, on the other hand, argues that Bowen does not leave Louie 'as a liberated figure for hope, but as a subject desperately striving to maintain her own fictions by crafting an identity for her son that represses the fact of his paternity' (Brook Miller, with Luke Elward, Tessa Hempel, and Philip Kollar, 'Narrative, Meaning and Agency in *The Heat of the Day*', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 132-48 (p. 146)).

Such trembling, quaking, rippling effects are also at work in the novel's opening scene in Regent's Park. The 'disturbing' music played by musicians with 'the faces and hands of ghosts' draws into its shadowy epicentre the 'solitary' strangers of the urban warzone, who are, in turn, pursued by 'those who had followed the others into the theatre automatically', in a chain of unknown consequence (p. 3, 5, 11). In the orchestra's pauses are tremulous outbreaks: the musicians '[turn] over their sheets of music', the audience bestows a 'ripple of clapping', Louie's programme 'fluttered to the ground' (p. 6, 7, 10). But this rippling and fluttering is a continuation of the 'already [...] drifting' leaves which, in the novel's opening paragraph, turn over, like the sheet-music, 'crepitating as though in the act of dying' (p. 3). In turn, the narrative itself has been set in motion by an event unstated at this point (the novel delays temporal specification of wartime for two pages), but which has already occurred outside the narrative frame (p. 3). This is a season, the narrator states, which had never 'been more felt' (p. 98). The rippling atmosphere of the novel's first scene describes, to use Derrida's words, 'a signal or symptom' of 'something that has already taken place', and that 'will insist on being repeated'.[303] Everything quivers, anxiously, vibrating on the threshold of the 'last silent crackle of sunset', echo of those 'crepitating' leaves, suspended in 'the act of dying', like the concert-goers who 'paused in the gateways doubtfully – all they had left behind was in sunshine, while this hollow which was the source of music was found to be also the source

[303] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, pp. 53-54.

of dusk' (*HD* p. 3, p. 7). They exhibit a fear which, as Amy Bell suggests, 'was the ghost haunting wartime London'.[304]

'War', states Bowen in *Bowen's Court*, 'is not an accident: it is an outcome. One cannot look back too far to ask, of what?'[305] And in *The Heat of the Day*, Harrison observes that, '[w]ar, if you come to think of it, hasn't started anything that wasn't there already' (*HD* p. 33). A narrative of personal and (inter)national 'outcome', *The Heat of the Day* positions war as an effect, a tremor of unknown origin. Even while the novel provokes this backward look towards the unknown or secret event, its consequences ripple on towards the inevitability of darkness and death, the 'incoming tide' of evening (*HD* p. 4).[306] Those quivering leaves do, after all, continue to fall like bombs (and like Robert) throughout the novel, in an autumnal resignation to temporal continuity, as Stella recognizes when she travels to her son's inherited property in Ireland, Mount Morris: '[t]he seeming of this to be forever was astonishing – until a leaf fell slowly, veering towards her eyes as though she had brought time with her into the wood' (*HD* p. 197). This is a leaf already 'plucked still quivering' by the ancestral ladies Stella imagines to have 'gone not quite mad' at Mount Morris; one of the leaves to the sound of 'crisping' piles of which she first came to know Robert (p. 100). And in the sense that *The Heat of the Day* is to be felt as an effect of a precipitating tremor, it might also be said that these September falling leaves continue those which fall in Bowen's earlier novel of civil unrest, *The Last*

---

[304] Amy Bell, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 153-75 (p. 155, p. 161).
[305] Bowen, *Bowen's Court*, p. 454.
[306] For Phillips, too, night and darkness in *The Heat of the Day* come to signify 'threatened violence' and the anticipation of death (*London Narratives*, p. 21).

September.[307] In both novels, melancholic autumn is the temporal setting for social collapse.

Trauma, war, in *The Heat of the Day*, is then partly felt to be undecidably an effect, and partly produces effects, so that it is affecting, and infecting, 'malarial': '[y]ou did not know what you might not be tuning in to, you could not say what you might not be picking up – affected, infected you were at every turn. Receiver, conductor, carrier – which was Louie, what was she doomed to be?' (*HD* p. 100, p. 278) No originating point of infection can be identified, and Louie's own role in the chain of effect is similarly unknown. Bowen also utilizes this metaphor of infection – picking up, perhaps, on this sense of war as a theatre for the 'act of dying' – in her secret reports on Eire, prepared for the Ministry of Information as part of her 'espionage' work during the war: 'I believe that with many people [in Eire] there is a nebulous feeling that war is *infectious*: the more belligerents accumulate in the Six Counties, the more likely it is that the "germ" will spread', she wrote; '[w]ar, in fact, is not *entered* but "caught" – or picked up – just as, passively and unwillingly, one catches or picks up measles'.[308] War, then, is a sweeping wave of infection, an effect of unknown germination.

---

[307] Christensen has connected the novel's falling leaves to Stella's role as a 'fallen woman' (*The Later Fiction*, p. 167).

[308] Elizabeth Bowen (as Elizabeth Cameron), 'Notes on Eire', The National Archives, DO130/28, 9 February 1942. Wills clarifies Bowen's wartime role: '[w]hile "espionage" is too strong as well as too narrow a term for what Bowen called her "activities" in Ireland, they did involve sending secret reports to the Ministry of Information, and meetings at the Dominions and the War Office, conveying her sense of the climate of opinion: taking the temperature amongst writers and intellectuals in Dublin, and amongst country people near her home in County Cork' (*That Neutral Island*, p. 117). Corcoran, too, notes that when Bowen 'used the word "spy" of her childhood self in the Dublin of the early years of the century in *Seven Winters* [1942], therefore, she was well aware that she was at that very moment engaging in activities which others in Ireland, including those whose conversations she was reporting on, would certainly have defined as a contemporary act of espionage' (*The Enforced Return*, p. 186). See also Paul McMahon who, in answer to the question of whether Bowen was 'a kind of spy' answers, '[i]n a sense, yes, so long as it is recognized that [her wartime activities were] often what "spying" meant' (*British Spies and Irish Rebels: British Intelligence and Ireland, 1916-1945* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), p. 375).

Stella and Robert's romantic relationship, too, may be seen to be a traumatic effect, a trembling, set in motion by an unidentifiable or unknown introduction. Their first words to one another are lost in the quaking noise of a bomb:

> She returned to Robert – both having caught a breath, they fixed their eyes expectantly on each other's lips. Both waited, both spoke at once, unheard. [...] Now down a shaft of anticipating silence the bomb swung whistling. With the shock of detonation, still to be heard, four walls of in here yawped in then bellied out; bottles danced on glass; a distortion ran through the view. The detonation dulled off into the cataracting roar of a split building: direct hit, somewhere else.
>
> It was the demolition of an entire moment: he and she stood at attention till the glissade stopped. What they *had* both been saying, or been on the point of saying, neither of them ever now were to know. Most first words have the nature of being trifling; theirs from having been lost began to have the significance of a lost clue. What they next said, what they said instead, they forgot: there are questions which if not asked at the start are not asked later; so those they never did ask. [...] The extraordinary battle in the sky transfixed them; they might have stayed forever on the eve of being in love. (*HD* pp. 104-105)

Like the novel's opening scenes, then, Stella and Robert's romantic relationship is suspended, 'transfixed' in anticipation. What we might read as these moments of trembling are, I think, traumatic effects of such collisions of stillness and movement, 'distortion[s]' exemplified by that strange figuration of immobility and reverberation, the 'shock-stopped' clock on the wall of the restaurant in which Stella and Robert dine, as well as by their two unsynchronized watches (p. 107). Their simultaneously 'unheard' words are not only drowned out, but replaced, by an explosion, so that their 'being in love' – and the narrative itself – might be seen as a form of shrapnel, traumatic issue of this bomb, and of the war. Stella and Robert's relationship is not only 'premised on a stranger's death', as Allan Hepburn asserts; perhaps more disturbingly, it is a consequence of a temporal

death, the 'demolition' of their first moment.[309] As Bennett and Royle point out, the 'origins of this love story' lie 'in a blitz-riven fictionality and absence, in an exchange of words which are never exchanged, in the phantom of an exchange which can never be known or forgotten'.[310] And while Hepburn persuasively argues that the couple's 'sense of timelessness, a symptom of trauma brought on by bombardment and accentuated by pervasive darkness, is a symptom of being scared to death', I want to suggest, rather, that their romantic relationship is a traumatic effect or 'symptom' of the 'timelessness' wrought by the bomb.[311] Stella and Robert are 'an accident', they '*are* friends of circumstance – war, this isolation, this atmosphere in which everything goes on and nothing's said' (*HD* p. 210). It might be seen that the lost first words of their romance shape their relationship around this secret, this irrecoverable 'lost clue'. If it is true, as Cixous asserts, that '[t]he true secret causes the most suffering, because it is the exact figure of death', and that '[i]f we have a secret we don't tell then we truly are a tomb', then it might be seen that Stella and Robert's romance is structured, from the outset, by a figuration of death.[312] It might be argued, furthermore, that not only are Stella and Robert unable to 'shake off the spectre of the war in which they met, and which defines their relationship', as Wills notes, but that more than this, they together mourn their temporal and linguistic loss – the 'apprehension' of which Stella later awakes to; they are united ('kindred spirits') in their shared

---

[309] Hepburn, *Intrigue*, p. 146.
[310] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 95.
[311] Hepburn, *Intrigue*, p. 148.
[312] Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. by Sarah Cornell and Susan Sellers, The Wellek Library Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 42. *The Heat of the Day*, Hepburn argues, 'treats love as a secret' (*Intrigue*, p. 140).

grief for a dead or absent moment, and for secret words which, once 'trifling', take on the (traumatic) 'significance of a lost clue' (*HD* p. 104, p. 105).[313]

The effect of time is the binding element of Stella and Robert's romance; but so too, it distorts the traditional dyad:

> Their time sat in the third place at their table. [...] The relation of people to one another is subject to the relation of each to time, to what is happening. If this has not been always felt – and as to that who is to know? – it has begun to be felt, irrevocably. On from now, every moment, with more and more of what had been 'now' behind it, would be going on adding itself to the larger story. (*HD* p. 217)

Time is the third presence in their relationship, an effect to be felt. Political and social trauma, in this novel, works pervasively, destabilizing, distorting, trembling the traditional dyadic conception of romantic love.[314] But note the way in which temporal unknownness intrudes upon, and becomes a part of, the effect (just as it intrudes upon the relationship). It is not just time, then, but its unknownness, which takes the third place. And it is the unknown, which has, as I have argued, set in trembling motion Stella and Robert's romance, and which now comes to describe their affair. This is the traumatic void with which the unknown Harrison, 'love's necessary missing part', is aligned, and within which he appears (*HD* p. 361). Harrison is unrecognizable, unidentifiable, and more than that, nullified: he is, at Cousin Francis's funeral, 'not known to be anyone', while Louie, early on, tells the counterspy, 'I don't know you [...] I don't even know who you are', and Robert, too, asks, 'is he anybody?' (p. 10, p. 77, p. 223) Harrison is, as Lee

---

[313] Clair Wills, '"Half Different": The Vanishing Irish in *A World of Love*', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 133-49 (p. 134).

[314] The novel's emphasis on this kind of distortion is picked up by Harold Pinter in his 1991 adaptation of the novel (Phyllis R. Randall, 'Pinter and Bowen: *The Heat of the Day*', in *Pinter at Sixty*, ed. by Katherine H. Burkman and John L. Kundert-Gibbs, Drama and Performance Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 173-82 (p. 175)).

recognizes, 'the fitting inhabitant of the spectral city, a man from nowhere'.[315] Even his Christian name – which is, unsettlingly, Robert – remains unknown until his final meeting with Stella. It is his figuration as a traumatizing or disruptive element and moreover, as unknown, as nobody from nowhere, which aligns Harrison with the absent or dead moment that functions as the beginning of Stella and Robert's romantic relationship. By stepping into the space of temporal death, the space opened up by the explosion, Harrison – who, like a time bomb, enters Stella's life 'on the quiver of the appointed hour as though attached to the very works of the clock', and is, moreover, able to anticipate the explosive vibrations of her telephone – works in a similar way: he distorts or trembles the romantic dyad and is able to wreak consequence (*HD* p. 21, p. 45).[316] Robert's 'rival' for Stella's love, Harrison impregnates her with the doubt that his third presence signifies: 'the story takes – seeds itself in some crack' (*HD* p. 209, p. 212). This 'seed', the secret of Robert's betrayal, is figured as what Ellmann terms a 'monstrous pregnancy'.[317] But perhaps just as significantly, as a traumatic effect it also takes on Harrison's association with the time bomb: '[i]n the night, how did I not hear it ticking under the pillow like your watch? [...] We have not, then, been really alone together for the last two months. You're two months gone with this' (*HD* p. 213). Harrison and his 'seed', his 'story', distends the romantic dyad; it represents a traumatic distortion of Stella and Robert's 'continuous narrative of love' and recasts Stella as the '*femme fatale*' (p. 89, p. 108). Blameless, in her

---

[315] Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 166. Similarly, for Vida E. Marković, Harrison is 'an odd man, almost a phantom' (*The Changing Face: Disintegration of Personality in the Twentieth-Century British Novel, 1900-1950*, Crosscurrents/Modern Critiques, ed. by Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), p. 114).

[316] See also Kenney, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 70.

[317] Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 154. This pregnancy metaphor is continued throughout the novel, as when Stella finally confronts Robert, she is 'exhausted by having given birth to the question' (*HD* p. 300).

divorce as now, Stella is nonetheless positioned by Robert and by Harrison as the focus of suspicion, as espionage is reinscribed through 'sexual perversion and moral corruption' – problems, Tammy M. Proctor asserts, 'that were associated with women', and moreover, it seems, with the female body.[318]

Inculcated as part of Stella and Robert's unity, I think, is their desire to avoid being as irrevocably unknown as their first words, to escape the terrible fate of anonymity suffered by London's 'unknown dead' (*HD* p. 99). It is for this reason that Louie, who is part of the ghostly unknown living, 'of meaning only to an absent person', seeks sites of belonging, and forms attachments – socially and sexually – to 'unknown people' (*HD* p. 13, pp. 161-62).[319] Her conversation with Harrison at the concert, for example, is a means of 'forc[ing] him to notice her', to momentarily cease to be unknown: 'her object was to feel that she, Louie, *was*' (*HD* p. 12).[320]

> Most of all the dead, from mortuaries, from under cataracts of rubble, made their anonymous presence – not as today's dead but as yesterday's living – felt through London. Uncounted, they continued to move in shoals through the city day, pervading everything to be seen or heard or felt with their torn-off senses, drawing on this tomorrow they had expected – for death cannot be so sudden as all that. Absent from the routine which had

---

[318] Tammy M. Proctor, *Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), p. 2. See also Lassner, 'Reimagining the Arts of War', p. 32; and Petra Rau, 'The Common Frontier: Fictions of Alterity in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* and Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*', *Literature and History*, 14.1 (2005), 31-55 (p. 36).

[319] See, for example, Sarah Sceats, who sees *The Heat of the Day*, for example, to question: '[i]n the light of such historical trauma and uncertainty, how *do* we locate ourselves; how, where and to whom or what do we belong?' ('Souls Astray: Belonging and the Idea of Home: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day*, Betty Miller's *On the Side of the Angels*, and *Death of the Nightingale*, and Muriel Spark's *Memento Mori*', in *Women's Writing, 1945-60: After the Deluge*, ed. by Jane Dowson (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 85-97 (pp. 85-86)).

[320] Louie's obsession with reading newspapers is not only a means of constructing an identity for herself, as Miller, Christensen, Parsons, and Adam Piette, for example, note, but is also a function of her desire to be known, for what she finds in the newspaper is 'an address to or else account of herself' (*HD* p. 168; Christensen, *The Later Fiction*, p. 52; Miller, 'Narrative, Meaning and Agency in *The Heat of the Day*', p. 143; Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis*, p. 197; Adam Piette, *Imagination at War: British Fiction and Poetry, 1939-45* (London: Papermac, 1995), p. 164).

been life, they stamped upon that routine their absence – not knowing who the dead were, you could not know which might be the staircase somebody for the first time was not mounting this morning, or at which street corner the newsvendor missed a face, or which trains and buses in the homegoing rush were this evening lighter by at least one passenger.

These unknown dead reproached those left living not by their death, which might any night be shared, but by their unknownness, which could not be mended now. Who had the right to mourn them, not having cared that they had lived? (*HD* p. 99)

Death, too, is 'felt' as an effect in the wartime scene of *The Heat of the Day*; indeed, it is to be felt as a trembling continuation, the inertia towards an 'expected' 'tomorrow', of 'yesterday's living'. The 'torn-off senses' of the dead continue to sense and to be sensed, to feel and to be felt; in their very 'absence' these 'unknown dead' have an effect. In a way similar to the destroyed first moment of Stella and Robert's meeting – and, moreover, like Louie, who 'felt she did not make sense, and still worse felt that the others knew it' – it is not, however, 'their death' which 'reproached those left living', but rather, 'their unknownness' (p. 165). In this novel, and in one of Bowen's essays of the Blitz, 'London 1940', strangers bid one another '[g]oodnight, good luck', for worse, these texts suggest, than 'to die that night', is 'to die unknown' (*HD* p. 100).[321] Mourning, the normal means, according to psychoanalytic thought, by which one accepts the loss of a love object, cannot occur here precisely because of this 'unknownness'.[322] Unmourned, the dead continue to haunt the living, to 'reproach' them with their unknowability, with the unincorporated psychic gap

---

[321] 'In Marylebone, shopping just before the black-out or making for home before the bombers begin to fill up the sky, we say, "Well, good luck!" to each other' (Bowen, 'London, 1940', p. 24).
[322] Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), in *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, pp. 203-18 (p. 203).

they figure.[323] If it is the case that trauma is 'about *not knowing* the extent of horror that one faces', and moreover, that trauma returns precisely because it was 'unassimilated', because it was '*not known* in the first instance', then it might be seen that the unknown dead of *The Heat of the Day* call attention to the way in which trauma, the unknown, resists comprehension and evokes fear.[324] 'I tremble', states Derrida, 'at what exceeds my seeing and my knowing'.[325] For Stella and Robert to mourn their unknown dead moment, then, may be one way of approaching a mourning of thousands of unknown dead people, those '[u]ncounted [...] shoals' which overwhelm their capacity for grief, their deaths part of 'the even worse you could not be told and could not desire to hear' (*HD* p. 100).

But it is precisely in seeking to be known by another, which Nicola Humble recognizes as driving the novel's 'curious chain' of characters '[d]esperate to be known and acknowledged', that Stella incorporates the horrific unknown into her own identity.[326] Stella's traumatic discovery is concerned with more than, as Julia Briggs notes, 'the theme of the impossibility of knowing another human being'.[327] Her relationship with the traitor Robert, the conflation of her life with his, means that even as Stella insists on their 'knowing' one another, Robert's unknownness has become, in Jordan's terms, 'a shadowy side of herself',

---

[323] 'For Bowen, like other writers, the pervasive presence of the uncounted dead [...], unsettles people's relation to time and memory, and disturbs their relationships to others, both living and lost' (Deer, *Culture in Camouflage*, p. 154).
[324] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 4; and Hepburn, *Intrigue*, p. 147.
[325] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, p. 54.
[326] Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s-1950s: Class, Domesticity, and Bohemianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 99.
[327] Julia Briggs, 'Resisting Nostalgia, Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', in Dowson, *Women's Writing, 1945-60*, pp. 29-37 (p. 30). See also Maslen, *Political and Social Issues in British Women's Fiction*, p. 48; and Marina MacKay, 'World War II, the Welfare State, and Postwar "Humanism"', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*, ed. by Robert L. Caserio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 146-62 (p. 150).

'*without* [*her*] *knowing*'; as Robert insists, 'there's been you and me in everything I have done. – You can't see that?' (*HD* p. 100, p. 103, p. 130, p. 304; my emphasis).[328] The boundaries between self and other, ally and enemy, have collapsed; Stella and Robert are, 'in effect [...] one another's accomplices already' because, Ellmann points out, Stella 'has been practicing neutrality involuntarily. Knowingly, she has been working for the Allied cause [...]; unknowingly, she has been sleeping with a Nazi spy' (*HD* p. 192).[329] Unnoticed by her, Stella has been psychologically infiltrated by the – and has become (one of the) – unknown.[330] That 'wall between the living and the dead [has] thinned' and it is no longer so easy to tell the living self from those unknown dead (*HD* pp. 99-100). It might be seen that Robert, the wounded returned soldier of the First World War, in this way comes to figure a locus of trauma and of traumatic effect, 'the delayed effects of strain or shock', in this novel (p. 343). But more than this, Robert comes to signify the unknown, unseen, or unrecognized site of trauma within Stella's psychic structures. As '[h]is experiences and hers became harder and harder to tell apart', and 'everything gathered behind them into a common memory', comes the traumatic recognition, for the reader and for Stella, not just that, as Hepburn states, 'the beloved face belongs to a spy', but that Robert's

[328] Heather Bryant Jordan, 'A Bequest of Her Own: The Reinvention of Elizabeth Bowen', *New Hibernia Review*, 12.2 (2008), 46-62 (p. 50). On Stella's 'blindness' to Robert's espionage, see also Jacqueline Rose, who suggests that it is in consequence of Stella's disaffection with the 'sickening complacency' of the English middle-class 'that she just might [...] have taken a Nazi into her bed. Without knowing it. Just about as blind, we might say, as you can get' ('Bizarre Objects: Mary Butts and Elizabeth Bowen', *Critical Quarterly*, 42.1 (2000), 75-85 (p. 77)). Furthermore, Robert's unknownness is so penetrating that Bowen has been accused of inadequate characterization in this respect by, for example, Bergonzi in *Wartime and Aftermath*, p. 87; see also Christensen, *The Later Fiction*, p. 165; Corcoran, *The Enforced Return*, p. 188; Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 160; Jordan, *How Will the Heart Endure*, p. 156.

[329] Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 152.

[330] For a discussion of this binary collapse in terms of novel's uncanny effects, see Rau, 'The Common Frontier', p. 32, p. 38.

behaviour is no longer only a 'malady' of his: noting this repetition of Stella's body as the site of the traumatic element, the infection, the 'infestation' has been caught, unknown, by her (*HD* p. 108, p. 310, p. 311).[331]

***

The performative structures of the traumatic unknown in *The Heat of the Day* enact this relationship between secrecy, the literary, and the cinematographic. Indeed, the novel's engagement with the unknown is conditioned by spectrality and performance, or illusion, what Bennett and Royle term the novel's 'uncannily dramatic qualities', not only in terms of its characterization, but also as a function of the narrative itself.[332] *The Heat of the Day* works to underscore its sense of the traumatic unknown and of façade through its self-conscious engagement with cinema, photography, and fiction, and with the ghostliness of these mediums.[333] During the twentieth century, Luckhurst argues, the new stylistic devices which cinematic technology made available – in particular, conventions to mark temporal disruption, such as the flashback – made cinema 'a cultural form closely attuned to representing the discordances of trauma'; so close, indeed, that it helped to 'shape the psychological and general cultural discourse of trauma'.[334] I

---

[331] Hepburn, *Intrigue*, p. 164.

[332] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 84. For alternative discussions of the cinematic and theatric aspects of *The Heat of the Day*, see Christensen, *The Later Fiction*, p. 86, p. 88; Dorenkamp, 'Fall or Leap', p. 19; Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 152, p. 157; Hoogland, *A Reputation in Writing*, p. 120; Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 165, p. 174; Phillips, *London Narratives*, p. 16; Piette, *Imagination at War*, p. 1, p. 2, p. 4; Schneider, *Loving Arms*, pp. 96-97; Watson, 'Variations on an Enigma', p. 88; Plain, *Women's Fiction of the Second World War*, p. 171; and Gill Plain, 'From War-Time to Women's Time: Coping with Conflict in Women's Fiction of the 1940s', *Time & Society*, 3 (1994), 341-64 (p. 351). Bowen also employs theatrical metaphors to describe the wartime atmosphere in 'London, 1940' (*The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 22-24).

[333] Corcoran has noted that '[t]here is a wry exposure of its own fictionality in the fiction that is *The Heat of the Day*' (*The Enforced Return*, p. 171). See also Miller, 'Narrative, Meaning and Agency in *The Heat of the Day*', p. 140; and Piette, *Imagination at War*, p. 163.

[334] Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, p. 177. See also Stewart, *Narratives of Memory*, p. 2, p. 7. Lara Feigel has argued that Bowen's wartime fiction is intensified by its cinematic effects ('The

want to suggest that just as Freud 'used the metaphorics of cinema' in his work in order to represent the processes of 'psychic mechanisms', *The Heat of the Day* makes use of cinematographic metaphors as a means of elucidating the ways in which trauma is (re)produced in narrative.[335] In 'Notes on Writing a Novel', written during the war, Bowen makes a direct link between cinematic devices and the novel:

> The cinema, with its actual camera-work, is interesting study for the novelist. In a good film, the camera's movement, angle and distance have all worked towards one thing – the fullest possible realization of the director's idea, the completest possible surrounding of the subject. Any trick is justified if it adds a statement. With both film and novel, plot is the pre-imperative. The novelist's relation to the novel is that of the director's relation to the film. The cinema, cinema-going, has no doubt built up in novelists a great authoritarianism. This seems to me good.[336]

In *The Heat of the Day*, cinematic metaphors are, overwhelmingly, associated with Robert; if he is seen, as I have argued, as the locus or the continuing effect of trauma in the novel, then it might be seen that the use of cinema's stylistic devices enable his traumatic representation.[337] For example, in the lounge at Holme Dene, which appears to have 'the glossy thinness of celluloid', Robert looks, in the late afternoon light, 'like a young man in Technicolour' (*HD* p. 124, p. 125). But it is the stilled image of him with 'his thumb on his lighter', stilled in the same way that 'in the cinema some break-down of projection leaves one shot frozen, absurdly, on to the screen', which figures, for Stella, 'the face of before she

---

savage and austere light of a burning world': Death, Time, Film and Photography in Bowen's Wartime Fiction', delivered at *Reading Elizabeth Bowen*).

[335] Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, p. 177.

[336] Elizabeth Bowen, *Pictures and Conversations* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), p. 184. In her wartime reports to the Ministry of Information, Bowen also discussed the censorship, in neutral Ireland, of films depicting the war ('Notes on Eire', 12-19 July 1942). For further discussion of cinema and censorship in Ireland during the Second World War, see Robert Cole, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War*, International Communications (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 74.

[337] It is therefore significant, I think, that 'Robert in adolescence had taken to photography' (*HD* p. 288).

opened her eyes' to the 'tingl[ing] [...] shock' of 'the breaking down of immunity' (p. 101, p. 106). The freeze-frame thus comes to figure the destruction of cinematic, romantic, and of defensive illusion. The traumatic recognition or 'apprehension of loss' describes, for Stella, the sudden end to numbness as a psychological defence; she moves from being the detached 'onlooker' to the first experience of the effects of the traumatic event, a 'nervosity' figured as 'a sort of imprisoned humming' in her head (p. 101, p. 102, p. 105).

Insofar as these aspects of the novel are also qualified by its concern with psychoanalysis – most clearly in terms of seeking Robert's 'case-history' and his motivation for betraying his country – *The Heat of the Day* may be seen to anticipate the Derridean equation concerning cinema, psychoanalysis, and spectrality (*HD* p. 112).[338] That is, for Derrida, as for Bowen, the ghost and the actor are aligned. Playing himself in the film *Ghost Dance* (1983), and asked for his opinion on the existence of ghosts, Derrida responds:

> Curiously, instead of playing myself, without knowing it I let a ghost ventriloquize my words, or play my role. [...] The cinema is the art of ghosts, a battle of phantoms. [...] It's the art of allowing ghosts to come back. [...] All this, it seems to me, has to do with, with an exchange between the art of the cinema, in its most original, unedited form and an aspect of psychoanalysis. Cinema plus psychoanalysis equals the Science of Ghosts.[339]

In the context of *The Heat of the Day*, the notion of 'playing oneself' is curious; although Harrison, the counterspy, is notably described as a 'ghost or actor' in terms of his 'appearances', he is not the only character who is figured in this way (*HD* p. 155). Stella, for example, preferring to 'sound a monster than look a fool',

---

[338] By attributing Robert's activities in part to his childhood trauma, Lee argues, 'Bowen, though not a Freudian, is in tune with current ideas' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 172). See also Maslen, who recognizes this in several 1940s novels (*Political and Social Issues in British Women's Fiction*, p. 88).

[339] Jacques Derrida, in *Ghost Dance*, dir. Ken McMullen, Other Cinema (1983).

for years performs the role of the *femme fatale*, the guilty party in her divorce from Roderick's father, Victor (p. 251). Indeed, she is first seen 'mim[ing]' an 'idiotic play at the window' of her flat, framed by the blackout curtains which open on this 'theatre of war' (p. 20, p. 348). Her flat is let already furnished, so that 'surrounded by somebody else's irreproachable taste', she inhabits a space unmarked by her own preferences (p. 22). And even at the inquest into Robert's death, she appears, in character, 'as the woman friend in the luxury flat' (p. 340). What this means, I think, is that in much the same way as Derrida describes, Stella does not play herself, but rather allows a 'ghost' to 'ventriloquize [her] words, or play [her] role'. In so doing, the novel exposes 'Stella' as an identity as tenuous, as unknown, as that of 'Harrison', who similarly 'guy[s] himself' (p. 12). Thus, when Stella longs to stay 'forever' at Mount Morris, 'playing this ghostly part', and '[u]nwillingly' regards 'her gloves, shaped by her hands, her bag, containing every damning proof of her identity, [which] were still, always, there on the centre table where she had put them down', what she longs for is to play the ghost, rather than to allow the ghost to play her, to continue to shape and play out the set of expectations – what she 'always' does – that make up 'Stella' (p. 182).

The Heat of the Day's associations between spectrality and identity make, then, a subtle but powerful statement about the threat war and trauma pose to psychological stability. This novel thus posits another implication of the Derridean equation of cinema and psychoanalysis, precisely because of the way in which cinema – and, by extension, other performative media, such as fiction and photography – participates 'in the process of haunting which, by itself,

deconstructs life/death, presence/absence and being/nonbeing'.[340] The photographs which cover the walls of Robert's childhood bedroom 'empty' the room of its occupant's existence, in the past and in the present:

> 'Each time I come back again into [this room] I'm hit in the face by the feeling that I don't exist – that I not only am not but never have been.' [...]
>
> 'But what were you doing *then* – and *then* – and *then*?' she asked, pointing from photograph to photograph. 'Or at any rate, who was doing what you seem to have done?'
>
> 'You may ask. I not only have no idea now but must have had even less idea at the time.' [...]
>
> '– Still, those must once have been moments.'
>
> 'Imitation ones. If to have gone through motions ever since one was born is, as I think now, criminal, here's my criminal record. Can you think of a better way of sending a person mad than nailing that pack of his own lies all round the room where he has to sleep?' [...]
>
> Comfortably slipping her arm through his, she said: 'No, they've only made this room as though you were dead.' (*HD* p. 129)

These photographs testify to Robert's 'criminal' performance or '[i]mitation' of existence, to his sense that the self is unknown, even absent, because it is ventriloquized and, like 'Stella', constructed of 'motions' carried out by a ghost, a *doppelgänger*.[341] But what is most disturbing about the photographs, I think, is that even as the room forms a kind of memorial, this sense of Robert's death becomes a simile, or a performance of memorialization: recalling Portia's bedroom in *The Death of the Heart*, the room works '*as though*' Robert were dead, and thus comes to figure a doubled performance of his death, recording his non-existence or unknownness in the past, and enacting it in the present. The room seems to indicate that Robert is neither living nor dead, so that he comes to exist only on the spectral border between the two. This kind of performance also describes Cousin Nettie's madness; unable to live up to Francis' expectations of

---

[340] Louis-Georges Schwartz, 'Cinema and the ~~Meaning~~ of "Life"', *Discourse*, 28.2/3 (2008), 7-27 (p. 13).

[341] See also Austin, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 7-8, p. 72. Corcoran has noted the novel's concern with the '*doppelgänger* effect' (*The Enforced Return*, p. 180).

her role as his wife, she 'took to going nowhere but up and down stairs, till I met my own ghost' (*HD* p. 242). Nettie, like Robert, plays out her role until she is faced with the shuddering of her own identity, and recognizes that this role has been played by a ghost.[342] If this kind of performance provokes in both Nettie and Robert a psychological collapse, then it might be seen that the novel anticipates a similar fate for Stella. Indeed, her final announcement to Harrison that she is to be married to 'a cousin of a cousin' suggests that she may be caught in a repetition of, haunted by, the fate of Cousin Nettie.[343] To meet one's ghost is thus a traumatic confrontation with one's own future and, moreover, with one's own death. To meet one's own ghost is an uncanny confrontation with the simultaneously known and unknown self.

The hauntedness of these characters, this psychological embedding of their own deaths, thus figures a means of approaching the unknown: that is, trauma, which 'can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence'.[344] ('One doesn't know *why one trembles*.') This is, perhaps, to what Hepburn refers when he argues that in this novel, '[c]haracter is a symptom of trauma. Character emerges at nodes of impossible-to-master circumstance'.[345] *The Heat of the Day* is thus representative of wartime 'anxious narratives' which, as Stonebridge describes, 'try and understand what it means for the psyche to be shaped by a history that it cannot assimilate'.[346] This inaccessibility or unassimilability, Caruth states, is constituted, in Freud's explanation of trauma in terms of a train accident,

---

[342] 'Of all Bowen's Anglo-Irish sleepwalkers, Nettie Morris comes the closest to achieving living death' (Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 162).
[343] Stewart has also noted the equation of Stella with Nettie (*Narratives of Memory*, p. 165).
[344] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 18.
[345] Hepburn, *Intrigue*, p. 161.
[346] Stonebridge, *The Writing of Anxiety*, p. 14.

through '*the act of leaving*'; this trauma, 'its very unconsciousness', she adds, 'is borne by an act of departure'.[347] But more than this, Caruth asserts, Freud's example 'is laced in the German' with variations upon the word, '*fallen,* "to fall"': '[b]etween the *Unfall*, the accident, and the "striking" of the insight, its *auffallen*, is the force of a fall, a falling that is transmitted precisely in the unconscious act of leaving'.[348] I want to suggest that this may constitute a useful means of understanding trauma in terms of the unknown and the effects of the unknown in Bowen's wartime novel, insofar as it elucidates the event of Robert's death, his 'fall or leap' from Stella's roof. The act of falling, that figuration of death, destruction and decay which recurs throughout this novel (recall the falling leaves and the falling bombs), may be seen to parallel the psychological behaviour prompted by the traumatic event. That is, extending Caruth's analysis, it might be possible to consider that the initial fall (the *Unfall*) constitutes the accident, or the initial traumatic event; the falling itself constitutes the period of latency in which gathers 'the force of a fall'; and the landing (the *auffallen*) constitutes a figuration of the impact or effect of the event. The first two stages can only be experienced through the third; it is for this reason, perhaps, that Robert's death is only narrated in terms of its impact and its aftermath. Stella 'never, then, *was* to know what had happened' (*HD* p. 340). Even in Stella's testimony, the temporal gap between Robert's departure from her flat and her discovery of his body cannot be narrated:

---

[347] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 22. See Sigmund Freud, 'Moses and Monotheism, An Outline of Psychoanalysis and Other Works', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and Anna Freud (1937-1939; repr. London: Vintage, 2001), XXIII.

[348] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 22.

> No, I had not heard anything: I simply went down. . . . I went down and opened the street door. . . . I say, I simply went down. No, nothing made me: I simply thought I would go downstairs and look out of the door. I don't know why: why does one do anything? . . . I beg your pardon. . . . No, I don't know how long after: I didn't look at the clock. Two minutes, five minutes, ten minutes: I don't know. . . . (p. 341)

Between the fall and the impact – in echo of that 'shaft of anticipating silence' through which falls the bomb that demolishes the first moment of Stella and Robert's meeting – thus lies the force of the fall, the force of the unknown (p. 104). This is figured not only through Stella's inability to answer the questions posted at the inquest – 'I don't know' – but through the ellipses which at once form a structural fragmentation of her testimony and mimic the psychological inaccessibility of the traumatic event. And the trembling impact of Robert's fall also reaches Louie; but because for her the identity of the faller is unknown, she imagines the faller as Stella: '[f]or Louie, subsidence came about through her now knowing Stella not to be virtuous. [...] For her, therefore, now it was Stella who had fallen into the street (pp. 344-45). That 'subsidence' in Louie refers to part of the opening sentence of the chapter, in terms which again place emphasis upon a quaking or trembling: '[t]here can occur in lives a subsidence of the under soil' (p. 339). It is, then, Louie who feels the impact, 'the long-term effects', of Stella's fall, because it is precisely as a consequence of her sense of Stella's lack of virtue (as a so-called fallen woman) that Louie, 'unknown' to Connie, 'drop[s] back again into vagrant habits', and becomes pregnant with her child (p. 346). The infant Thomas Victor upon whom the novel closes is thus himself a traumatic effect, the trembling force of the fall to be felt.

The Heat of the Day engages with what I see as a recurring idea in Bowen's fiction; that is, the relationship between literature, secrecy, and the

memory of trauma. Specifically, it seems to me that in *The Heat of the Day*, secrecy is embedded as a traumatic event in the novel's idealization of narrative:

> [Stella] looked from the armchair proper to Robert to the armchair commandeered by Harrison, but found herself thinking of neither of these – of, rather, Victor, her vanished husband. Why of Victor now? One could only suppose that the apparently forgotten beginning of any story was unforgettable; perpetually one was subject to the sense of there having had to be a beginning *somewhere*. Like the lost first sheet of a letter or missing first pages of a book, the beginning kept on suggesting what must have been its nature. One never was out of reach of the power of what had been written first. [...] The beginning, in which was conceived the end, could not but continue to shape the middle part of the story, so that none of the realizations along that course were what had been expected, quite whole, quite final. (*HD* p. 146)

In Stella's reverie, the secret or unknown narrative beginning takes on the characteristics of the traumatic event – felt only in its impact, in its power to 'shape' successive 'part[s] of the story'. The emphasis on an unknowable '*somewhere*', moreover, articulates the '*something*' which comes, in the novel, to figure the inaccessible secret of Robert's psychological trauma, which has the explosive potentiality of 'dynamite' (p. 67; see also, for example, p. 32, p. 143, p. 213, p. 303, p. 337, p. 358). The 'something, somewhere' is the unknowable traumatic event, the unassimilable secret. But above all, the passage draws attention to the strange paradoxical forgetting of the unforgettable, the way in which trauma is at once preserved and inaccessible, so that the story's beginning, which one did not have 'time to know', remains unknown, even as its effects are felt (p. 358). This is finally recognized by Stella as a coping mechanism when she observes to Harrison: '[y]et most of all there is something one has got to forget – that is, if it is to be possible to live. The more wars there are, I suppose, the more we shall learn how to be survivors' (p. 358). Forgetting, the embracing of the unknown, is finally acknowledged as a condition of wartime survival; trembling,

'an experience of secrecy or of mystery', is *The Heat of the Day*'s testament to this.[349]

[349] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, p. 54.

7

Post:

A World of Love

'Reading a letter, only.' Jane hesitated, put up a hand and glanced at it, as though wondering whether it should or should not have sealed her mouth. But she *was* glad to have spoken. 'One of some letters,' she said, beginning to smile.

'What, then the post's come? What have they done with mine?'

'Not the post. No, these came out of a trunk.' (*WL* p. 26)

Let us note: *Nachtrag* has a precise meaning in the realm of letters: appendix, codicil, postscript. The text we call present may be deciphered only at the bottom of the page, in a footnote or postscript. Before that recurrence, the present is only the call for a footnote.[350]

A World of Love is circumscribed by letters; but these letters are 'not the post', not what they appear, or purport to be. They are purloined letters; returned to sender, put aside, put inside a trunk, and disinterred by another. The seal – of the trunk, of the letters, of Jane's mouth – is broken, and the letters are revealed to be 'not the post' just delivered, but the past, unearthed from its archive. This narrative of purloined letters opens up ideas about the siting of memory, the ownership and theft of identity and of a text, and about the question of textual privacy. In this chapter, I want to consider the ways in which the letters of *A World of Love* disrupt conventional notions of time and space by analysing the novel in terms of Kristeva's essay 'Women's Time', and in terms of Derrida's motif of

---

[350] Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', trans. by Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies*, 48 (1972), 74-117 (p. 93).

destinerrance. I will also explore how these disruptions might inflect and develop our understanding of the novel's engagement with traumatic memory.

In the shadow of the obelisk posted before the front door, and beneath the letters in the attic, the Danbys live, uncertain tenants of Montefort, Antonia's crumbling property and symbol of the Anglo-Irish 'descendancy'. Fred Danby is Antonia's illegitimate cousin, charged with the care of the house, the farm, and Lilia, once fiancée of Fred and Antonia's cousin Guy, one of 'a generation [...] mown down' in the First World War (*WL* p. 44). Abandoned to a life together, Fred's 'unforeseen passion for [Lilia] ran its unspeaking course'; now the couple and their two daughters, Jane and Maud, live in a quiet, tense isolation behind locked gates (p. 18). The events of the novel fill only two days, but in it is compacted a stillness and endlessness that has haunted Montefort since Guy's death decades earlier; time stretches out the lengthy summer days in one pregnant pause: 'the house was great with something', caught, as it were, between the strokes of the kitchen's stopped clock (p. 21, p. 27). Antonia and Jane, both back from London, stir up memories in ways resented by Lilia, the 'snow-woman' frozen in time, her anaesthetized resolve melting beneath the oppression of the 'heat of the day before' (*WL* p. 9, p. 18).[351] Lilia has 'seceded from life'; she has become 'marble', and 'set up as a statue' (*WL* p. 96).[352] She thus recalls Anna Quayne in *The Death of the Heart*, for her heart is atrophied, numbed in response to the trauma of failed romantic love. The novel's action concerns Jane's discovery (or theft) of a cache of love letters in a trunk in the attic – dateless,

---

[351] For further discussion of 'heat' in *A World of Love*, see Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 106; Christensen, *The Later Fiction*, p. 91; Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 186; and Martha McGowan, 'The Enclosed Garden in Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', *Eire-Ireland*, 16 (1981), 55-70 (p. 55).

[352] See also Austin, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 77.

unaddressed letters thought to be from Guy, that are passed from hand to hand throughout the novel, and which provoke in each woman the hallucination of Guy's presence (*WL* p. 41).[353] The penultimate event of the novel, like the conclusion of Bowen's only other novel set entirely in Ireland, *The Last September*, is a conflagration: Jane burns the letters, Guy's post.

While it might be seen that *A World of Love* describes a movement from the timelessness of the unconscious and the latency period associated with the memory of trauma, to an acceptance of linear time that represents an ordered past, present and future, I believe that far from being time*less*, the novel presents an alternative temporality to describe the time of traumatic memory.[354] The novel is characterized by delay, by its sense of being 'afterwards': post-Guy, post-war, post-Ascendancy.[355] However, one of the paradoxes of remembering trauma is that time after, time post-trauma, fails to progress in a linear manner, but is rather compelled or condemned to repeat the past. The pause of latency that characterizes the deferred action of traumatic memory makes 'post' a lie. Just as the letters of *A World of Love* are 'not the post', the novel's sense of 'afterwards' is also an illusion, for Guy's spectral presence means that life at Montefort can never be 'post'. Old calendars and the 'often stopping of the cheap scarlet clock' in the Montefort kitchen 'spoke of the almost total irrelevance of Time, in the

---

[353] This spectral character is not typical of Bowen's novels, but is the 'closest she came to writing a ghost novel' (Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 182), and 'to the explicit supernaturalism of some of her short stories' (Neil Corcoran, 'A Ghost of Style: The Aftermath of Anglo-Ireland in Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', *English*, 52 (2003), 125-37 (p. 127)). See also Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 184.

[354] Christensen, for example, makes much of the timelessness at Montefort (*The Later Fiction*, p. 112, p. 152, p. 157). See also Rachel Mayrer, 'Gothic Memory and Forgetfulness in Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love* and "The Demon Lover"', *Irish Studies Review*, 16.1 (2008), 33-40 (p. 34, p. 37, p. 40)); and Josette Leray, 'Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', in *The Big House in Ireland: Reality and Representation*, ed. by Jacqueline Genet (Kerry, Brandon, 1991), pp. 163-78 (p. 171)).

[355] See also Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*. p. 178.

abstract' (*WL* p. 21). But if linear 'Time' is of 'almost total irrelevance' here, an idea which is reinforced by the 'datelessness' of the letters being attributed to 'the count of time [...] being kept in some other way', then we might see that these texts – the novel and its letters – are not timeless, but rather work on their own temporal terms (p. 34).

That is, the narrative is only timeless if we adhere to a conventional notion of linear temporality; I think the novel may be seen to foreshadow Derrida's observation on the 'timelessness' of the unconscious as 'determined only in opposition to a common concept of time, a traditional concept'.[356] The unconscious, Derrida argues, is 'timeless only from the standpoint of a certain vulgar conception of time'.[357] *A World of Love* might almost be said to deride the experience of remembering as a 'going back', for it appears to experiment with thinking about memory and the unconscious as sites outside of 'a certain vulgar conception of time', resisting linear notions of past, present and future. If traumatic memory refuses to see the past as past, then *A World of Love* stages this refusal of linear temporality, and instead posits not timelessness, but an alternative temporality both of the unconscious, and of the novel.

In resisting the measures of linear time, *A World of Love* moves away from such constrictions and towards cyclical and monumental time, a temporality which Kristeva has identified with the experience of the hysteric, the one who 'suffers from reminiscences'.[358] I think we might usefully read this novel in terms of a rejection of linear temporality, one that approaches Kristeva's description of

---

[356] Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', p. 96. Lee describes the 'novel's fascination with time and memory' as 'its most interesting (and characteristic) quality' (*Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 189).
[357] Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', p. 97.
[358] Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time', trans. by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *Signs*, 7/1 (1981), 13-35 (p. 17).

the repetitive, cyclical, 'extrasubjective' time of the hysteric.[359] *A World of Love* enacts what Kristeva describes as 'the massive presence of monumental temporality', a measure of memorializing 'which has so little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word "temporality" hardly fits'.[360] This conceptualization of time resonates, in particular, with the inescapable presence of the monument outside Montefort.

A World of Love might be seen to 'cheat' a linear conception of time, and to figure monumental temporality as a more appropriate description of the way in which its time operates, a description already figured by the ivy, symbol of eternity, covering the house, as well as by what it calls the 'poetically immortal' landscape (p. 48). I suggest that *A World of Love* is not concerned to demonstrate the danger of a repressed past, but rather of the limitations of linear temporality. An inability to pin down time within a linear framework is repeatedly mentioned: for example, Fred and Jane observe that '[t]his morning isn't this afternoon', and '[y]esterday feels like years ago', while an indignant guest at Lady Latterly's dinner party tells Jane, '[n]ow it's no use trying to pin me down! When I say "one time," I mean the time I mean, and that's good enough. [...] I'm my own calendar' (p. 40, p. 55, p. 64). The novel's task then is not to exorcize the past, but to open out alternative temporal modalities, to reject an understanding of time that is solely linear, that is therefore 'obsessional' or 'monomania[c]' (*WL* p. 50).[361]

It is Jane who most powerfully resents the inexorable past of *A World of Love*:

---

[359] Ibid., p. 16. This suspicion of linear temporality in *A World of Love* might also be seen to prefigure the cryptic spatio-temporal structures of Bowen's next novel, *The Little Girls*.
[360] Kristeva, 'Women's Time', p. 16.
[361] Ibid., p. 17.

> . . . she had an instinctive aversion from the past; it seemed to her a sort of pompous imposture; as an idea it bored her; it might not be too much to say that she disapproved of it. [...] Most of all she mistrusted the past's activity and its queeringness [...] Yes, so far as she was against anything, she was against the past; and she felt entitled to raid, despoil, rifle, balk or cheat it in any possible way. (*WL* p. 35)

I think we might read Jane's often-cited 'aversion from the past', her 'disapprov[al]' and 'mistrust' of it as an indication that, in this novel, it is impossible to confine the past to the past. Jane resents that such temporal limitations mean that she is 'required' to live in the 'bad odour' of '[h]er time': 'Like someone bidden to enter an already overcrowded and overcharged room, she paused for as long as possible on the threshold' (p. 34). Jane's pause 'on the threshold' postpones, 'for as long as possible', an acceptance of those temporal limitations. The stilled pose of this 'inheritor' who figures 'the foreignness of this supplanting new time', thus mimics the obelisk, the novel's sign of monumental time (p. 51). Moreover, that obelisk signifies a shared site of spatio-temporal reference for Jane and Guy; monumental time does not insist upon their separation (p. 35, p. 142). It rises, 'somewhat surprisingly' at the novel's beginning, to stand paused in thought, in Guy's thought, in Jane's thought, and is a (reminder to) pause for thought, to remember (p. 9). Just as Jane pauses on the symbolic threshold, and pauses on the threshold of the novel, standing by the obelisk with Guy's letters in the novel's opening scenes, the temporality of *A World of Love* comes to rest, (re)poses, on the monument.

The obelisk is a symbol of monumental time, of perpetuity. It is a constructed site of memory, or *lieu de mémoire*.[362] It saves a spatio-temporal site for the act of remembering as it reminds one, in its pose, to pause. The obelisk,

---

[362] See Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux De Mémoire*', *Representations*, 26 (1989), 7-24.

then, perpetually postpones the possibility of forgetting and functions as a permanent trace of memory. The monument holds the place of memory, and resists the way in which 'life works to dispossess the dead, to dislodge and oust them' (*WL* p. 44). But the obelisk of *A World of Love*, as Fred and Lilia's response to it makes clear, fails in this task:

> 'I wish I could remember its origin – surely it must have had one, didn't it, Fred?'
>
> 'Chap put it up in memory of himself,' said he, with a glance at the thing, for the first time struck by it.
>
> 'What, while he was still alive?' marvelled Lilia. 'Rather peculiar, surely? What was his name?'
>
> 'Couldn't tell you.'
>
> 'Oh, then he *is* forgotten!'
>
> During the pause, Antonia joined the group, was asked, looked bored and supplied the name. (p. 137)

While the memorial does incite a 'pause' in its observers, it is not a pause of reverent remembrance, but of absent-minded forgetting. Into the breech of this psychic absence Antonia steps, 'supplie[s] the name' and thus compensates for Fred and Lilia. But Antonia's act of remembering is a supplement to a memorial that was itself intended to act as a belated or deferred supplement to memory. More than this, insofar as the act of building a monument in memory of oneself suggests a fear of being forgotten, of being out of mind, it also comes to signify a site upon which one's identity depends, and is thus an extension of, or supplement to the self.[363] The obelisk of *A World of Love* may in this way be seen to stand in for, to hold the place of, the legitimate children the Danbys' ancestor failed to produce, children who would have borne his name and so prevent that name from being forgotten.

---

[363] Mayrer suggests that the obelisk represents 'forgetfulness', while '[t]his forgotten family member is characteristic of the forgetfulness that seems to invade not the house but its residents' ('Gothic Memory and Forgetting', p. 34, p. 35).

To cease to think about time in linear terms means that, rather than representing a ghost to be exorcized, Guy becomes an inescapably present figure of monumental time, and as immovably present as the obelisk. Indeed, for Leray, the obelisk of *A World of Love* works as a guy for Guy; it figures 'a double [...] a replacement that signifies both the presence and absence of the dead man [...] [It is] the anchoring point of Guy'.[364] Thus, Antonia witnesses Guy, not so much as a ghost, conventionally conceived, but as he was and now is:

> All round Montefort there was going forward an entering back again into possession: the two, now one again, were again here [...]
>
> Their tide had turned and was racing in again [...] This was not the long-ago, it was *now* or nothing [...] Ghosts could have no place in this active darkness – more, tonight was a night which had changed hands, going back again to its lordly owners: time again was into the clutch of herself and Guy. Stamped was the hour, as were their others.
>
> What was returned to her was the sense of "always" – the conviction of going on, on and on. [...]
>
> They conceived of no death, least of all death-in-life – an endless rushing, or rushing endlessness, was their domain, as it was their element. (*WL* pp. 77-78)

Antonia does not experience remembering as a return to the past, to the 'long-ago', or as the past's return to the present, but as 'the sense of "always"'. All 'time' is an 'endless rushing' of a turning 'tide', measured only by cycles, by repetitions of 'again', and the 'on, on and on', of the monumental moon, with no regard for the march of linearity. All 'time' is now, all time is 'always', all time is 'here' – time outside 'now' does not exist, it is 'nothing'. A similar temporal collapse also occurs when Lilia perceives Guy's presence: when '[t]he breathless girl stop[s] to put down the woman's workbox', Lilia is at once both girl and woman, undivided by a linear understanding of who she has been and now is (p.

---

[364] Leray, 'Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', pp. 171-72. Ellmann also observes that 'it is the dead that keep the living in position in *A World of Love*, indeed the word "guy" means a rope, chain, or rod used "to secure or steady anything liable to shift its position or to be carried away"' (*The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 180).

98). Death, for Guy, is an impossibility, for this would require the passing of time, and in this site of 'endlessness' – notably not 'timeless', but 'endless' – beneath the awe of the obelisk and of monumental time, Guy is always already present, immortal.

The desire for monumentalization, then, figures the desire for immortality, or what Derrida has conceived of as 'archival desire'.[365] But even though the archive and the monument are sites of memory, paradoxically, Derrida states, such sites 'will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience'.[366] Rather, the archive, like the monument, works precisely 'at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory'.[367] In *A World of Love*, the desire to resist being forgotten exhibited by the ancestor who built the obelisk is matched by Guy, who has, in a fit of archival desire before he is sent to his wartime death, stored his letters in the Montefort attic.[368] Both the monument and the archive are intended to remain and to preclude forgetting and the progression of linear time. And insofar as the archive is not, Derrida insists, 'a question of the past', but 'a question of the future, the question of the future itself', it might be seen that Guy archives the textual figurations of himself in order to exist in a future to come.[369] Precisely in its focus on the endlessness of futurity, the archive keeps its contents safe from loss and forgetting. This desire for monumentalization also describes Guy's designation of Lilia as his 'intended', so that she too is determined by an event in the never-arriving future, an archive (a

---

[365] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz, Religion and Postmodernism, ed. by Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 12.
[366] Ibid., p. 11.
[367] Idem.
[368] See also Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 183.
[369] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, pp. 33-34, p. 36. See also Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 105.

world) of love for Guy. Linear time does not pass in the archive, in Lilia: it and she are sites of monumental time. The archive represents 'always'.

The archive, or monument, cheats the threat of death, of being erased, forgotten, and in this way works against the progression of linear time. But at every moment, Derrida asserts, the archive is threatened by the death drive, the desire to pre-empt destruction: this desire is '*le mal d'archive*, "archive fever"'.[370] Archive fever runs high in Montefort, as the novel persistently threatens conflagration, from Lilia's initial confession to Antonia that 'I lie sleepless, sometimes, picturing you in flames', and Fred's insistence that the family clear out the attics and burn the contents, to a concern for the 'stuffed, stuffy attics', filled with the 'inflammable' 'wreckage left by the past' (*WL* p. 12, p. 27, p. 40).[371] The 'malady' which, the narrator observes, is peculiar to '[o]bstinate rememberers of the dead', may be recognized as archive fever – a simultaneous desire to destroy and to preserve (*WL* p. 44).

***

By precluding the possibility of arrival, the novel's letters, those unsent missives, also communicate outside a conceptualization of linear time, and relate to Kristeva's monumental time, as 'always'. And just as the letters of *A World of Love* exist outside of linear temporality, they also resist space and destination. The novel's letters might be considered within the context of Derrida's 'Envois', of the 'irreducible twists in any sending system', and in particular, that which is 'most

---

[370] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 12.
[371] 'Even without the conflagration at the end of [...] *The Last September* in mind, most readers will surely anticipate a similar outcome for this novel' (Christensen, *The Later Fiction*, p. 92).

private within such a system' – a love letter, for example.[372] The letters of *A World of Love* might be seen to enact the possibility of what Derrida terms *destinerrance*, or adestination, described by J. Hillis Miller as 'a spatial figure for time'.[373] The letters and the obelisk thus both figure *A World of Love*'s concern with spatio-temporality. Derrida's notion of *destinerrance* describes the tendency of a letter to 'wander', to 'err' from the destination it 'always fail[s] to reach', calling into question Jacques Lacan's assertion that 'a letter always arrives at its destination'.[374]

Referring to Derrida's essay, 'Telepathy', in which he 'hypothesizes a letter' sent into the world without a known receiver, Miller says of such a letter:

> Its content and its goal do not precede it. Someone or other chances upon the letter and says, 'It is intended for me. It has chosen me, and I choose to be chosen by it. I say, "It's me (*c'est moi*)."' That might seem to imply that the letter has found its intended recipient. No, the recipient did not exist before receiving the letter. The letter creates the recipient, unpredictably, incalculably, by chance or even by error. The letter reaches that recipient by *destinerrance*.[375]

The letters of *A World of Love* create Jane as the recipient, that unidentifiable '*YOU*' (*WL* p. 48). She insists that the letters have found her, chosen her, to have 'been no more than delayed on [their] way to her' – reached, it seems, by a kind of romantic version of the 'chance' or 'error' of *destinerrance* (*WL* p. 48).[376] However, this is complicated by the fact that Jane has disrupted an archive. That

---

[372] Alan Bass, 'Translator's Introduction: L Before K', in *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, by Jacques Derrida (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. ix-xxx (p. xii).
[373] J. Hillis Miller, 'Derrida's *Destinerrance*', *MLN*, 121 (2006), 893-910 (p. 893).
[374] Ibid., p. 897; and Jacques Lacan, 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"', trans. by Jeffrey Mehlman *Yale French Studies*, 48 (1972), 39-72 (p. 72).
[375] Miller, 'Derrida's *Destinerrance*', p. 905.
[376] That the love letters are unaddressed, Clare Hanson notes, means that they 'can seduce *anyone*: the Oedipal/romance script far exceeds any of the individual characters (the name Guy underlines this – the letters are from any man (guy) to any woman)' ('Little Girls and Large Women: Representations of the Female Body in Elizabeth Bowen's Later Fiction', in *Body Matters: Feminism, Textuality, Corporeality*, ed. by Avril Horner and Angela Keane (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 185-98 (p. 189)).

is, although Jane fancies that she is the delayed but intended recipient of these letters, her fatal misreading of the purpose of these texts – that is, to immortalize Guy – means that she, grave-robber, purloins the documents from their attic-crypt. All the locks and knots of Montefort – the 'chain-knot' on the gate, Guy's signature, the knot of Antonia's pearls, Jane's ribbon on the letters – do little to hold off this act of theft (*WL* p. 42, p. 116).[377] Her appropriation brutally forces her mother to repeat the experience of traumatic loss (Guy's infidelity and death) as the letters, symbol of Guy, are first stolen and then burned in an audacious assertion of ownership brought about by *destinerrance*.

Jane raids and rifles through the attic and through her mother's memory, much as she also appears to have 'ravened nothing but fairness out of her mother'; she mimics Lilia and her model of romantic femininity by resiting and re-entombing the love letters – under her pillow, within a ribbon, under a tree, under a stone – taking her mother's 'world of love' for her own (*WL* p. 33, pp. 79-80, p. 107). 'She likes to feel that they are [to her]', Antonia wryly observes (p. 43). Jane seems, I think, not to be in love with Guy, but rather in love with being her mother (who loved Guy): in love with being the 'Beloved' (p. 96). To be '[f]alling in love with a love letter' is to mimic Lilia, to be in love, to be in a world of love (p. 39).

But Lilia's world of love is a world of loss, of nothingness, of death. Lilia is nothing other than 'Guy's girl', for 'virtually, nothing more than this had happened to [her and Antonia] since their two girlhoods' (*WL* p. 51, p. 104).[378]

---

[377] Christensen also observes that Montefort is a 'fortress', and reads this in terms of the Irish Big House being 'originally designed to keep out intruders' (*The Later Fiction*, p. 86, p. 92, p. 134).
[378] Andries Wessels also asserts that 'Lilia still defines herself in terms of her romance with and engagement to Guy' ('Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*: A "Cultural Analysis" of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in the Twentieth Century', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 21/1 (1995), 88-95 (p. 91)).

> Yes, but if not the Beloved, what was Lilia, Nothing. Nothing was left to be.
>
> And now these letters. To whom, why?
>
> Are you to be leaving me nothing, O Guy, then? (*WL* p. 96)

Lilia is not only left nothing, willed nothing by Guy, but left as nothing, embodying the vacant crypt, the 'O Guy', of Guy's archive.[379] Indeed, that 'O' of 'O Guy', symbol of his absence, reappears in Maud's obsession with the 'o'clock', Jane's identification of herself as Ophelia, and in the novel's acronym, A.W.O.L., which links Guy's undesired absence with his military death. Jane, 'her mother's daughter', is similarly 'mindless', nullified (*WL* p. 18, p. 54). Yet the mimic Jane does not say nothing, like her mother, but rather, says 'nothing'. Responding to Maud's desire to know what Jane is 'playing' or 'pretending', the elder sister replies, twice, 'nothing', and when Maud fails to hear (p. 47):

> 'Nothing – nothing – nothing.' On that descending note Jane again became as she was before, letting the deep keen dream come combing through her, keeping her being running like tressy water-weed, like Ophelia's drowned hair. (p. 49)

Jane is, like Ophelia, like Lilia, in possession of nothing but 'husks' of letters that are themselves 'nothing' for, Lilia insists, '[t]here happened to *be* nothing for Jane this morning' (p. 34, p. 37). Described by, in imitation of, and expressing 'nothing', Jane embodies, indeed is, the generation Guy has failed to fill. 'She should have been his daughter!' spills from Antonia's lips, just as Jane's confession that she had found the letters had earlier escaped from her unsealed mouth (p. 26, p. 80).

---

[379] 'That enchanting love-on-a-leave, that idealization undoomed – as he probably knew – ever to fade so far failed to connect in Guy with outside reality that he had forgotten to make a Will' (*WL* p. 14).

> 'Poor Jane's said practically nothing.'
> Lilia said: 'It's been more than enough.'
> 'I only do wish,' said the girl, 'that I had said absolutely nothing. [...] From now on I shall; I mean I shall not.' (p. 41)

Yet saying 'practically nothing', is not the same as saying 'absolutely nothing' or, indeed, the same as saying the word, 'nothing'. Jane's unsealed mouth, forming the 'O' of 'nothing', speaks Guy's absence, and counters Lilia's cryptic silence.

Lilia's identity has been shaped by her refusal to mourn Guy's death. Indeed, *A World of Love* suggests that archive fever and melancholia amount to something very similar.

> Her inner face, by now gaunt with solitude, looked out not without nobility through the big white mask padded with flesh. Sorrow was there in front of her like an apparition: she saw now, with belated dread, what life had proved to be, what it had made of her. [...] Loss had been utter: not till today had she wholly taken account. Guy was dead, and only today at dinner had she sorrowed for him. (p. 50)

Like Anna in *The Death of the Heart*, Lilia 'mask[s]' and protects her 'inner face', the youth she is paused in, and has never progressed beyond: 'she still stood under that station clock. The clock-hands stood still: she was seventeen' (p. 95). Lilia is anaesthetized to 'sorrow' until Jane pillages her memory, appropriates its contents, and betrays archival purpose by destroying that which has been carefully retained. Although Lilia believes that she has 'stay[ed] faithful to Guy's memory', she has rather stayed faithful to her own memory, the memory of herself as she was in Guy's eyes, and thus to 'Guy's memory' of her, stilled in time beneath that eternally striking clock (still striking, its chimes still sounding, thanks to Maud's obsession with Big Ben) (p. 17). And like Dinah in Bowen's next novel *The Little Girls*, the discovery that she has been robbed is devastating for Lilia; just as the 'tearing-out of the centre of the picture still left a quiver of edges torn', the theft

leaves behind a 'quiver' of pain (p. 98). Lilia's numbness is disrupted by her daughter, who seeks to succeed to her identity. Each time Jane rummages, as it were, in her mother's mind, Lilia appears to have difficulty breathing, clutching her hand to her throat or lungs as the parasitic girl reaps the fragments of her mother's life, wearing her down with the 'intensity of a brought-about recollection' (p. 42, p. 50, p. 90, p. 95, p. 139).

Jane seeks to succeed – to purloin – her mother's identity. But theft is eventually re-enacted upon the criminal, when the letters are stolen from Jane's imitation crypt. Acting on the assumption that it was Lilia who stole from her, Jane burns the letters, cruelly destroying that which signifies, in fact, creates, the identity of the recipient, the identity over which she and her mother tussle, the 'Beloved'. Not only does the novel describe the traumatic loss of a lover, then, but the mother-daughter rupture, as Jane struggles to develop her identity. Like Derrida's hypothetical letter Jane, who is 'seldom *addressed*' by her mother, enters the world without an 'intended recipient' (p. 38; my emphasis). The novel ends when, at the airport, a space that both is and is not a destination, and 'with the air of someone who cannot help knowing she must be recognized', Jane reaches her lover by *destinerrance*, and '[t]hey no sooner looked but they loved' (p. 149).

In her reading of *A World of Love*, Ellmann considers these problems of ownership – seen, for example, in Lilia's perturbed question, '[h]ow can they be "from" when they're not *to* her?' – in the context of Lacan's 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"' (*WL* p. 41).[380] However, where Lacan asks to whom a letter

---

[380] See Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, pp. 182-84.

belongs, I want instead to consider *where* a letter belongs, thereby approaching Derrida's assertion that 'the letter has [...] its own proper itinerary and location'.[381] In Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' (1845), the 'proper place' of the letter, the place in which 'its meaning is found', Derrida asserts, is the 'nothing[ness]' of woman, the Queen.[382] The letters of *A World of Love* – that never quoted space of nothingness – were thus best left in Lilia, site of cyclical time, who 'queen[s] it' over Montefort, whom Jane has, throughout the novel, sought to knock from her throne, and whom she plays at beside the river, repeating, '[n]othing – nothing – nothing' (*WL* p. 18, p. 47). It might be seen that the 'proper place' of the letters was not out in the open, but rather, in Lilia, in the nothingness, the nothing happening, of Lilia's past; yet once Jane has disinterred the letters, and set in motion the traumatic *destinerrance* of these texts, they can never go back: 'ignorance cannot be made good' (p. 119). Overcome by archive fever, Jane burns the letters so that they cannot be lost again; their only available resting-place, now, is the 'cave' of the kitchen range, not entombed but now cremated (p. 21).

I can no longer defer my conclusion. The obelisk functions as a site of monumental time, a notion of 'always' that precludes the passage of linear time and thereby, of forgetting. So too, the preserved letters represent an archive, disinterred by Jane who, seeking to usurp Lilia's romantic identity, claims the place of recipient, destroying the possibility of Guy's resting-place in her mother's memory. The letters of *A World of Love* disrupt both preservation and anaesthetization to the past. I think that what these disruptions to spatiality and

---

[381] Lacan, 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"', p. 57; and Derrida, *The Post Card*, p. 439.
[382] Derrida, *The Post Card*, p. 439.

temporality enact is a figuration of the Freudian *Nachträglichkeit*, the deferred action or afterwardsness characteristic of traumatic memory, so that the world of love woven by the delays and deferrals of these letters might be seen to be representative of the alternative space and time, rather than the timelessness, of the memory of trauma. Yet what is troubling about the novel's conclusion, I think, is that while Jane may have grown beyond playing at being in love, and is now able to look to (and love) the future, she has left the older generation, hapless victims of (identity) theft, caught in that monumental site, stilled before the house and in the backward glance of the two daughters. If, in *A World of Love*, the past is ultimately left behind by Jane, then Lilia, Antonia and Fred are left with it, denied the possibility of working through that, after the cremation of the letters, has been perpetually deferred.

8

Crypt:

The Little Girls

> Yesterday, you may remember, we made each other a promise. I now recall it, but you already sense all the trouble we will have in ordering all these presents: these past presents which consist of the present of a promise, whose opening toward the present to come is not that of an expectation or an anticipation but that of commitment.[383]
>
> If alive but in hiding, the two should know they have nothing to fear from Dicey, who continues to guard their secret.[384]

The Little Girls, Bowen's penultimate novel, is a narrative concerned with a clandestine past; the novel's formal, thematic, and structural crypts at once protect and display its secrets. Committed to their shared 'past present', the three women of this novel, three 'Weird Sister[s]', return to the coffer or crypt they secretly buried together as three little girls (*LG* p. 176). It is their avowal to one another that links the two distinct temporal periods of the novel, and that ties Dinah ('Dicey'), Sheila ('Sheikie') and Clare ('Mumbo') together, as their divergent presents are linked by their commitment to a commitment of the past. In this chapter I will consider how an understanding of the crypt as it is thought through in *The Little Girls* and as it has been theorized in contemporary critical theory are mutually enlightening. Not only do psychoanalytic and deconstructive theories of

---

[383] Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, trans. by Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava and Peggy Kamuf, The Wellek Library Lectures, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 47

[384] Elizabeth Bowen, *The Little Girls* (1963; repr. New York: Anchor, 2004), 29. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *LG*.

the crypt unpack this novel, but so too, *The Little Girls* may be seen to encourage an interrogation and development of these very theories. Through an engagement with the concepts underpinning cryptomimetic readings which, Jodey Castricano states, '[draw] attention to a writing predicated upon encryption', this novel enables us to deal with several questions surrounding the interaction of literature, trauma and memory.[385] *The Little Girls* complicates and disrupts our thinking about the 'return of the repressed', about responses to trauma, and about the representation of these in literature. Specifically, I will consider the ways in which *The Little Girls* is concerned with the representation of repression and its relation to non-linear temporality and chronology in narrative, as well as how this relates to the promises of the novel's plot; the interaction between identity and narrative; and the ways in which the crypt 'opens up' an understanding of a 'surface-depth model' of secrecy and literature. This not only moves towards an evaluation of the 'ideal literary object', to use Miller's term, but more than this, to a consideration of what these cryptic structures, and their connection in this novel to criminality and patriarchy, might mean for our understanding of *écriture feminine*.[386] This chapter will extend Ellmann's discussion of encryptment and melancholia in *The Little Girls*, as well as Bennett and Royle's examination of secrets and language in this novel, by seeking to elucidate how *The Little Girls* uses the crypt in order to think about surface and depth in narrative, and what, then, this novel might have

---

[385] Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 6.
[386] J. Hillis Miller, 'Derrida's Topographies', *South Atlantic Review*, 59.1 (1994), 1-25 (p. 16).

to say about the nature of reading in Bowen, as well as about literature, or the ideal literary object, more generally.[387]

In the first section of *The Little Girls*, Dinah Delacroix collects objects for her large cave, or time capsule. Through these actions she recalls when she had, as a little girl, collected items intended for posterity with two other little girls, and seeks them out, so that they might together disinter their buried coffer of secret objects. These girls, now successful women, are reluctant to be unearthed in a manner so embarrassingly public, for Dinah has advertised widely and cryptically in order to find them; their reawakened friendship is tense and awkward. In the novel's second section, Bowen returns to the girls' childhood, to the burial of the coffer, and to the days leading up to World War One. The third section returns to the present and the '[unburying] of the coffer' (*LG* p. 76). It is, however, discovered to be empty – a revelation which precipitates in Dinah something that might be called a nervous breakdown. The closing moments of the novel serve to reunite the three women in a relationship that was impossible whilst the coffer and its contents remained buried in their shared memory. The box and the significance of its contents and later emptiness circumscribe the novel and its engagement with secrets and cryptic structure, despite Bowen's statement to the contrary in her notes for a public reading of *The Little Girls*:

> The 'box' theme – *which I do hope may not be taken as* too *symbolic* is *far* from being the whole of *The Little Girls*
> It is, in fact, little more than the *spine* of the plot
> This is a story about identity.
> It is about the *involuntary* element in behaviour: 'Chance, not choice.'[388]

---

[387] Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 199; and Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 135.

[388] Elizabeth Bowen, notes for a public reading of *The Little Girls* (n.d.), HRHRC 7.4; original emphasis. This concern with the underlying meaning of a symbol is also present in the earlier novels *The Last September* and *The Death of the Heart*; in the former, Lois and Marda express

Dinah, however, advises that 'you need not worry if it is a symbol, as practically everything is, as we now know' (*LG* p. 193). While the '"box" theme' may not be 'the whole of *The Little Girls*', it does form the 'hole' of it, the cryptic silence around which the novel is built. By describing this theme as 'little more than the *spine* of the plot', Bowen plays down this theme as the overarching structure or framework which holds together the novel as a 'whole', but nevertheless is forced to admit the 'fact' that it is 'more than the *spine*'. Indeed, it may be seen that the '"box" theme' at once encrypts and is encrypted by the 'story about identity'. The identities of the three women are as tied to the existence of the coffer as its form and presence is a result of their identities. In structure and in content, *The Little Girls* reiterates these encryptions.

In *The Little Girls*, Bowen's experimentation with form and with a new narrative stance, in which she only presents her characters from the outside, and never reveals what they are thinking or feeling – mimics the structure of the crypt and the secret.[389] *The Little Girls* describes the composition of inside and outside, the depths of the crypt and the mask of appearance or performance: 'people *are* much the same, if one goes down deep', Dinah observes; '[a]ll the variety seems to be on the surface' (*LG* pp. 4-5). The novel's cryptic 'Unknown Language' may also be seen to come into play here as a demonstration of the simultaneous possibility and impossibility of reading between the lines, beneath the surface. Christensen's identification of key word clusters, which reveal this novel's preoccupation with death and the supernatural, may be developed in a manner

---

their exasperation that, in novels, '[e]ven things like – like elephants get so personal' (*LS* p. 142); while in the latter, Eddie states that he 'hate[s] art – there's always something else there' (*DH* p. 136).

[389] Spencer Curtis Brown, Foreword to *Pictures and Conversations*, by Elizabeth Bowen (London: Allen Lane, 1974), pp. vii-xlii (p. xxxviii).

advocated by Castricano; that is, they may be used as a 'positive lever' for a reading of the novel, without 'designat[ing] either the word or the thing as the master key that will unlock the "truth"'.[390] The crypts of *The Little Girls* work in both form and content to elucidate cryptomimetic reading.

'Two things are terrible in childhood', Bowen once wrote; 'helplessness (being in other people's power) and apprehension – the apprehension that something is being concealed from us because it is too bad to be told'.[391] Both 'helplessness' and 'apprehension' are concerned with the future, with being propelled along a passage of time, unable to stop its perpetual progression, anxious as to the knowledge this forward movement might bring. Yet, Bowen suggests that it is knowledge of the past – specifically, a secret or unspoken past – that is feared. What lurks there, locked beyond conscious thought? Apprehension is in this context a derivative of helplessness, for the child is frightened of that which she cannot control – the power of knowledge is in the hands of another. In these ways, helplessness and apprehension are put to work in *The Little Girls*, for it is in part through an attempt to regain control that Dicey determines the 'box possibility' (*LG* p. 113). Since, as Bowen points out, '[a]ccretion is a major factor in art', Dicey can 'not be rid of' her obsessions until she has accrued and encrypted them, if not in a book, then in a box.[392] It is Dicey's apprehension surrounding the unspoken secrets, the 'transgenerational phantoms', as Abraham

---

[390] Castricano, *Cryptomimesis*, p. 7. Christensen identifies word clusters 'revolving on death and burial [...] as well as those to do with the supernatural' (*The Later Fiction* p. 93, p. 95). See also June Sturrock, 'Mumbo-Jumbo: The Haunted World of *The Little Girls*', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 83-95 (p. 83). Furthermore, Miller, in his reading of Derrida's *Fors*, notes that, '"Secret" is Crypt's middle name, along with "Death" and "Cipher", as Derrida observes of the latter two' ('Derrida's Topographies', p. 13).

[391] Elizabeth Bowen, '*Uncle Silas*, by Sheridan Le Fanu' (1947), in *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 100-13 (p. 111).

[392] Ibid., p. 110.

might term them, of her deceased father and widowed mother that motivates her passion for the crypt, in her childhood and in her later life.[393] The reader's 'demand for knowledge', and the text's demand that the reader engage with its secrecy, drive the narrative.[394]

Perhaps more explicitly than any of Bowen's other fiction, *The Little Girls* is a novel about memory, about the patterns of its preservation or abandonment: 'the mechanics of nostalgia'.[395] It is concerned with time and with the ways in which memory can precipitate a temporal collapse, for in Dinah's cave of memory-exhibits 'it was some other hour – peculiar, perhaps no hour at all' (*LG* p. 5). The characters often insist on renaming memory, describing it as a 'sensation' or a 'seizure', precisely because of this confusion between past and present (p. 20, p. 44). Lee suggests that in this novel memory has 'fallen into disrepute'.[396] Rather, it seems to me that this novel demonstrates a suspicion not of memory but, as in *A World of Love*, of time and its linearity.

> I've been having the most extraordinary sensation! Yes, and I still am, it's still going on! Because, to remember something, all in a flash, so completely that it's not 'then' but 'now,' surely *is* a sensation, isn't it? I do know it's far, far more than a mere memory! One's right back again into it, right in the middle. It's happening round one. Not only that but it never has *not* been happening. It's – it's absorbing! (*LG* p. 20)

'Mere memory' is superseded by 'sensation', the event of the past becoming present, of 'then' becoming 'now'. Such an observation foreshadows the epigraph to this chapter, 'these past presents which consist of the present of a promise'. The promise Dinah recalls 'all in a flash' is still valid, still present – indeed, it has

---

[393] Nicolas Abraham, 'Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology' (1975), in Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, pp. 171-76 (p. 171).
[394] See Elizabeth Bowen, *Afterthought: Pieces About Writing* (London: Longmans, 1962), p. 218; and Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 191.
[395] Kelly, 'The Power of the Past', p. 1.
[396] Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 184.

been all along. It is not a memory, for 'it never has *not* been happening'. Remembering the promise paradoxically introduces the impossibility of it as a memory; it is Dinah's acknowledgement of its continuing presence that precipitates her search for Sheila and Clare.

The structure of the novel underscores this continuity of past presents, for as Christensen observes, the middle section of the novel is not presented as a flashback, but as 'a separate narrative present'.[397] Kelly sees this middle section as 'disrupt[ing] the forward motion of the text, forming a kind of black hole within it', a hole of stilled time into which Dinah is drawn.[398] Significantly, Dinah is 'in the middle' of this sensation, 'absorb[ed]' – even encrypted by it. It might be suggested that Dinah is experiencing the return of the repressed – the idea that a traumatic event, unable to be assimilated into conscious thought, will later return unbidden and assail one as if experiencing this trauma for the first time – for this memory has always existed, encrypted in her mind.[399] Dinah's 'sensation' is in a sense a haunting, a spectral return of the past, for 'haunting, by its very structure, implies a deformation of linear temporality' like that she describes.[400] This works, in particular, when one considers Clare's observation that Dinah 'never had any memory' (*LG* p. 44). She prefers to 'call it a seizure', implying an unexpected psychic spasm that has reawakened her friend to this event of their youth (p. 44). It is Dinah's climactic recognition of this 'seizure', this temporal disintegration, which incites her breakdown: '[a]nd now [...] the game's collapsed. We saw there

---

[397] Christensen, *The Later Fiction*, p. 159.
[398] Kelly, 'The Power of the Past', p. 3.
[399] See Sigmund Freud, 'Repression' (1915), in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 523-33 (p. 530).
[400] Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, 'A Future for Haunting', in *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*, ed. by Peter Buse and Andrew Stott (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 1-20 (p. 1).

was nothing *there*. So, where am I now?' (p. 208). The collapse of the game, the memory, the sensation, the seizure is brought about by the discovery of there being 'nothing *there*' – merely an empty coffer.

As Dinah has returned the coffer and its promise to the present, its emptiness comes to signify an absence in the past *and* in the present. When Dinah asks 'where am I now?' and 'who would be there to see, were they all gone?' she shows how this collapse means that she, as a '[cheat] of Time' is, like Edward in *Friends and Relations*, now unable to position herself temporally (p. 8, p. 104). Dinah's real question is: '*when* am I now?' 'Space causes the same anxiety as time, when one is at sea with regard to it', the narrator states (p. 51). This confusion surrounding time and identity is anticipated at the novel's beginning, when Dinah adamantly recalls that the three little girls 'are far from nowhere. Never have we been nowhere' (p. 23). Only in this way does Dinah differ considerably from her mother, who disregards space and time: '[a]s for her surroundings, they were nowhere. Feverel Cottage, the sofa, the time of day not merely did not exist for Mrs Piggott, they did *not* exist' (p. 94). Just as for a spectre, spatial, temporal and textual boundaries mean little to Mrs Piggott.

However, while the past as revenant may in some ways be seen to work in this text, as it does throughout Bowen's fiction, through the processes of traumatic memory, this novel twists such traditional means by which trauma and repression are thought about and represented. In *The Little Girls*, what was thought buried does not return: the coffer is empty. It is the little girls themselves who are named as 'revenants', rather than the precious objects they intended for posterity (p. 196). These ideas are anticipated by Dinah's early observation: '[t]hat cave idea's been

nice, and I'd never call it a fake, but of course it's been really only a repetition. – No, perhaps not so much exactly that as a going back, again, to something begun. Anyway, now I know' (p. 21). But is it true that a repeated act is falsified? A fake is unreal, a counterfeit, as is a spectre. This is, perhaps, the idea to which Dinah refers: the cave is a spectral imitation of the coffer from her childhood, a repetition of an image from long ago. Dinah makes clear that she has repeated or returned to the past – the past has not, by contrast, returned to her. She is the active revenant rather than one passively haunted, resisting the 'apprehension' and 'helplessness' of her childhood. Dinah's reference to knowledge repeats Bowen's observation, for Dinah's refusal to be helpless with regard to the information people of the future should have of her 'vanished race' is performed through her cave collection (p. 10). It is apprehension of the future that Dinah repeats, not merely the action of gathering objects for posterity. Knowledge of the past is released from the repression or crypt of traumatic memory by her concern for knowledge of the future.

By the novel's end, however, Dinah admits to Clare that '[m]istakes have histories, but no beginning – *like*, I suppose, history?' (p. 299). Repetitions stretch back endlessly, it seems. Dinah has revised her belief that she has returned 'to something begun', and recognized that it is impossible to identify a beginning to this history: 'there's nothing like talking over old times is there? Those, one never gets to the end of, still less the bottom of' (p. 246). The novel demonstrates these repetitions in the endless folding out of images in the window of the picture shop in the Old High Street:

> All this was to be wondered at through two layers of glass – the picture's shop's window's [sic] and the glass in the gilt or ebony frames. But the

> greater wonder was that, outside the pictures, there the Old High Street actually *was*. You could verify simply by turning round: there, it indeed remained – a magnified picture. So seeing it, one saw it for the first time. . . . Moreover, a portion of the Old High Street (that exactly across the way from the picture shop) reflected itself not only in the shop window but in the glass of these numerous pictures of itself. The reflection itself looked like a large painting. The gables, etc., were there twice over. (pp. 121-22)

Reflected, depicted, magnified, repeated, the street reappears over and over. *The Little Girls* removes the possibility of identifying a beginning to these reflections, because the Old High Street, what one might consider to be the originator of these repetitions, is now merely 'a magnified picture'. The girls see it 'for the first time', then 'twice over': each reflection is a painting, each painting a reflection. In this way time is presented in *The Little Girls*: beginnings are made impossible, voided; as Bennett and Royle argue, there is here 'an indefinite deferral back to a past which is empty, like a coffer'.[401] *The Little Girls* might be seen to suggest that we are only subject to repetition, that an originary event cannot be located, and indeed, that in this way repression and the means by which traumatic memory functions call into question linear temporality and narrative chronology.

The Little Girls therefore subverts what might be seen as a more conventional 'return of the repressed' narrative. Although Dinah's cave of memory-objects could be read as her compulsion to repeat the repressed memory of burying the coffer in her childhood, and Sheila and Clare are at first resentful of the repressed Dinah's return to their lives, along with her '[i]nsinuations – malicious, insidious, mischievous, damaging', it is the apocalyptic unearthing of the empty coffer in *The Little Girls* which demonstrates that in this novel, the repressed does not return: it disappears (*LG* p. 45). The discovery of this

---

[401] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 130.

vanishing provokes in Dinah a collapse of her identity structures – but why? Why should Dinah place such emphasis upon this coffer and its missing contents? I propose that Dinah is not a hysteric, as one might at first assume from this reaction. Rather, I believe her to be what Abraham and Torok term 'cryptophoric', carrying unspoken secrets.[402]

The hysteric, Abraham and Torok suggest, practises constitutive or dynamic repression – here, 'the desire, born of prohibition, seeks a way out through detours and finds it through symbolic fulfilment'.[403] The cryptophore, on the other hand, is characterized by the presence of what is commonly and metaphorically referred to as the tomb and the lock, an analogy also used in *The Little Girls*, for in answer to Dinah's query regarding the location of the girls' 'Unknown Language', Clare replies that it has '[g]one' into an 'attic' in her head – '[a]nd the key's lost' (*LG* p. 199). Similarly, Sheikie – whose nickname encloses a 'key' that her Christian name does not – is described as being '[m]ore barnacled over. Far, far more barnacled over than you or I are' (p. 186). Such architectural envisioning of memory usefully informs a psychoanalytic reading of the novel. The tomb and the lock are more accurately termed preservative repression; here, 'an already fulfilled desire lies buried – equally incapable of rising or of disintegrating. Nothing can undo the consummation of the desire or efface its memory. This past is present in the subject as a *block of reality*; it is referred to as such in denials and disavowals'.[404] The hysteric, therefore, manifests a secret desire on the surface, while the cryptophore keeps the 'secrets of the tomb' locked in hidden depths (*LG* p. 300).

---

[402] Abraham and Torok, 'The Topography of Reality', p. 158.
[403] Ibid., p. 159.
[404] Idem.

***

But what does the cryptic structure have to do with literature? It would seem that the ideal literary object would harbour no secrets. It would always be wholly accessible by way of the words.[405]

The content of the novel is what affects us; and the content, because it expands in the reader's mind, may by far exceed what is stated in the actual writing – this, in fact, is one evidence of creative power.[406]

Buried within *The Little Girls* is this debate – an argument which may be seen to return to the problem of the crypt itself: that is, is the crypt the structure or the hollow interior? Is literature, 'the ideal literary object', formed by the words manifest on the page, or by its latent content? For Bowen, it is the 'shadow' which makes a novel:

> There is much that the reader relies upon being told, therefore much of writing is bound to be informative – as to what is happening to whom, and where, and when. So much is the bone-structure of story-telling. Novel-writing, however, is more than that: it is when we come to the narrative's 'why's' and 'how's,' the complex causes of action, the ripples of its effect, the shadowy ambience of the personality, that we touch what makes the essential *novel*.[407]

Although Miller convincingly makes the argument that a text cannot be more than itself, Bowen appears to anticipate (and to question) these very ideas in *The Little Girls* and in this essay, 'Exclusion' and, just as assuredly, to demonstrate that the characters and the narrative may exist beyond the words on the page. Christensen sees this as being especially enacted through spoken language, asserting that '[c]haracterization through speech thus combines with the dynamics of reading to forge Bowen's dialogue into a complex experience in which the active

---

[405] Miller, 'Derrida's Topographies', p. 16.
[406] Bowen, *Afterthought*, p. 216.
[407] Ibid., p. 217. 'Shadow' reappears in Bowen's description here of the fleshing out of character: '[c]omplete and detached as beings, they reveal, as beings do, complexities, inconsistencies, contradictions; and, through being three-dimensional, they take on shadow' (pp. 218-19).

participation of the reader plays no little part'.[408] A novel *can* harbour secrets, Bowen suggests. More than this, its secrets enforce an active reading experience – they form the novel's 'shadowy ambience', the hollow interior of the crypt. Just as the crypt cannot exist without both its firm shell and its inner space, so too, the novel is formed by both its formal structure and its embedded endless significations.

Bowen's observation of her experiments in writing style in *The Little Girls* – her presentation of 'characters entirely from the outside' – inflects this argument.[409] According to her literary executor, Spencer Curtis Brown, Bowen explicitly states that there is more to this novel than text – she has 'deliberately' avoided the explicit statement of the internal world of her characters. In a contemporary review of *The Little Girls*, Anthony Burgess picks up on the importance of surface and depth in this novel, stating:

> . . . you will find that women have a better natural fictional equipment than men. They notice surfaces, which is what novels are made out of; they have a phenomenal semantic range when it comes to dealing with texture, colour and nuance of speech; being the primal order of creation, they *enclose* men and see through them.[410]

Burgess's observations are intriguing in terms of a reading of crypts and of literary objects in *The Little Girls*, for he explicitly states that 'surfaces [are] what novels are made out of', suggesting, by extension, that secrecy and textuality are mutually exclusive. At the same time, he appears to be invoking the (needless to say, sexist) epithet of woman-as-crypt, 'the primal order of creation'. There is a slippage here in the assumption that the crypt (novel, woman) is the surface, that which '*enclose*[*s*]', not that which is enclosed. There is also a suggestion here of

---

[408] Christensen, *The Later Fiction*, p. 82.
[409] Brown, Foreword to *Pictures and Conversations*, p. xxxviii.
[410] Anthony Burgess, 'Treasures and Fetters', *Spectator*, 21 February 1964, p. 254.

enclosing or encrypting as a means of control; men, secrets, 'shadowy ambience' are 'repressed' in order to be fully known, in order for the façade, the surface, the secret, to be 'see[n] through'. However, *The Little Girls* disrupts such ideas about surfaces and secrets, always already anticipating a reading that might reduce an understanding of the literary object to either surface or depth, rather than a play between the two. Although, as Bennett and Royle assert, 'novels are entrances designed to entrance, like the entrance to Clare's novelty gift shop', they also pull us in, make us want to investigate those novel(tie)s, the secret depths and wares.[411] This is, perhaps, what Lee refers to when she notes that Bowen's 'last two novels are looking for a new kind of fictional language and method. In doing so, they stir up qualms about the novel form itself', for this novel is 'stir[red]' by these complications of surface and depth, by the 'destructive' possibilities of 'story' (*LG* p. 95).[412]

The Little Girls may be seen to engage with and to put into practice ideas about the novel and its (violently) expanding content, those layers which ghost the text. These arguments regarding literature and the notion of the secret are also present in concepts of historicism, the 'very founding principle' of which, claim Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, is

> . . . its imagined correspondence between the linguistic text, and the non-verbal, referential, categories outside it, is therefore the product of rhetorical movements that invite the critic to read the text, as de Man would have it, 'as a kind of box that separates an inside from an outside, [with] the reader or critic as the person who opens the lid in order to release in the open what was secreted but inaccessible inside.'[413]

---

[411] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 132.
[412] Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 183.
[413] Buse and Stott, 'A Future for Haunting', p. 15.

The act of (critical, historicist) reading, therefore, parallels the act of opening the coffer or crypt and releasing what it contains. It is the discovery of the secrets of the text which gives the reader satisfaction. But what if the text, the box, was found to be empty, as it is for the little girls? 'And now, nothing', Clare silently observes to Dinah. 'There being nothing was what you were frightened of all the time, eh? Yes. Yes, it was terrible looking down into that empty box' (*LG* pp. 306-307). In one sense, the emptiness provides the potential for a spectral space, for a site of haunting. But more than this, would the reader not, in the 'terrible' discovery of this nothingness, feel a sense of betrayal? Would we not feel robbed, as the little girls have? Here, and in Abraham and Torok's essay, there is a repeated return to ideas of crime, of guilt, and of shame; analysis of these will shed further light on the text and on the engagement of Bowen's work with secrecy and the ideal literary object.

The novel's secret is a promise made by three little girls: a promise to each other, committing to a present silence, and a promise to the future consisting of both a warning and a testimony to their existence. However, the girls' strict adherence to the terms of the promise – that it should be kept secret – makes it shameful. The guilt they feel for having transgressed the proprieties of being 'good little girls' evolves into a self-sentencing of criminal guilt, so that the secret itself is remembered as a crime. Abraham and Torok term the secret, or the location of its burial, 'Reality', and note that it 'is born of the necessity of remaining concealed, unspoken. This means that, at the moment of its birth, Reality is comparable to an offense [sic], a crime'.[414] In these ways, criminality,

---

[414] Abraham and Torok, 'The Topography of Reality', p. 158.

fear of the law, of being outside the law, taints the text. The clandestine or criminal nature of the secret first appears in Dinah's advertisements seeking her friends, whom she also wishes to disinter.[415] Believing the documents to be a Will, a legal document, Dinah's housekeeper, Francis, reads (*LG* p. 27):

> Imperative Dicey confer with Mumbo and Sheikie. The past not so buried as it appears. [...]
>
> [W]hether married or otherwise or living under real or assumed names [...] Crisis arisen. [...]
>
> Your former confederate Dicey seeks you earnestly, in connection with matter known so far only to us. Whole affair now looks like coming to light. [...]
>
> Where are Sheila Beaker and Clare Burkin-Jones, last heard of in Southstone? Anyone who can throw light on their disappearance is requested to contact their anxious friend, the former Diana Piggott. If alive but in hiding, the two should know they have nothing to fear from Dicey, who continues to guard their secret. Should they care to write, she will not reveal their whereabouts. Whatever the past, she would gladly see them. Write Box xxxx. (pp. 28-29)

Dinah's cryptic language, her encoded message to her childhood 'confederate[s]' circles the idea of a criminal or shameful act (note that in these advertisements she nowhere refers to herself as Dinah Delacroix, her current, respectable name). More importantly than this, however, in demanding to be read 'between the lines', her advertisements reveal the very presence of the secret – stripping the secret of its secrecy, she all but gives it away. It is for this reason that Clare and, especially, Sheila, are so concerned by Dinah's advertisements; indeed, Sheila suggests that they position themselves on the side of the law and take legal action against this 'widely spread innuendo' and veiled accusation of criminal activity (p. 45, p. 47). The girls are, however, caught in a bind, for it would be a (moral) crime to break the promise, and yet the promise and its keeping are also, they believe, criminal.

---

[415] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 121.

Intriguingly, the repetition of 'Write Box xxxx' at the end of each advertisement foreshadows the unnameable crypt, the box, later revealed. To write to 'Box xxxx' is to write not to Dinah, but to the secret she guards. Also present in Dinah's search for her friends and in Sheila and Clare's conversation is a concern for names ('real or assumed'), and especially, for protecting a good name, as Sheila seeks to do through the law, in the name of the law. Her name, maiden and married, is that to which she attaches most importance; emblazoned on boards 'all over Southstone and through the area', her name denotes her social standing and her location (p. 44). Clare, too, attaches success to the name of her alter ego, 'MOPSIE PYE', and is anxious to protect her business from scandal (p. 46). The pseudonyms, or nicknames, of their childhood serve to cast further secrecy and illegitimacy across the advertisements, but they later work to improve the girls' friendship by becoming a means of tying the present to the past. The girls' names also complicate our thinking about secrecy in this novel, for their alter egos – their childhood nicknames and their changed names in adulthood – have enabled them to 'disappear' while still remaining present. That is, the names of the little girls allow them to be visible and invisible at the same time, to hide themselves in plain view, as it were – emblazoned across signs and billboards – like the secret crime of Poe's 'The Purloined Letter'. In this way, the novel moves towards a Derridean or 'surface' conceptualization of the literary secret. 'Literature keeps a secret which does not exist, in some way', Derrida argues:

> Behind a novel, or a poem, behind what is in effect the richness of a sense to be interpreted, there is no secret meaning to be interpreted. A character's secret, for example, does not exist; it has no thickness outside the literary phenomenon. Everything is secret in literature and there is no secret hidden *behind* it – there you have the secret of this strange institution *on the subject* of which, and *within* which I never stop wrestling

> [...] The institution of literature recognizes, in principle or essentially, the right to say everything or to say without saying, and thus the right to the secret displayed as such.[416]

The simultaneous secrecy and visibility which surrounds naming in *The Little Girls* suggests that everything, in this novel, is at once secret and not secret, there and not there, safely buried and yet gone.[417] It might be seen that it is this paradox, then, which incites Dinah's psychological collapse upon finding the coffer empty, for it is the empty box itself which figures, in this novel, literature's 'right' to say everything and nothing, to at once insist upon the presence of a secret coffer and then to show this to be empty. Secrets, crypts, in *The Little Girls*, have a false bottom; they are transgressive, criminal.

This is not the only crime of the novel; for example, Dinah and Clare break into Frank's house, but to leave an item (a mask) rather than to steal anything. (The discovery is made here that Frank, too, hoards boxes, 'lawyer's boxes', the contents of which are unknown [*LG* p. 239].) It is for fear of incrimination that Dinah refuses to leave a thumbprint on the wax with which the girls seal the coffer; like a careful criminal, she will not leave evidence behind. Disobeying Clare's command that '[w]e can't burgle', Dinah steals her mother's pistol from a drawer (p. 115). The girls trespass in the dead of night to bury the coffer and to unearth it years later, searching for a space to keep a memory that has, as Abraham and Torok put it, no '*legal burial place*'.[418] Finally, they discover that in the manner of a grave robber, someone has trespassed upon their

---

[416] Derrida, *Paper Machine*, pp. 162-63.

[417] Bennett and Royle make the related point that '[t]he climactic, indeed apocalyptic moment of *The Little Girls* is itself an encrypted drama of naming. [...] [W]hat we find when we dig up *The Little Girls* is a strictly uncontainable series of words. "Inside" the novel, buried within the words, within the innermost coffer, is the name "Dinah" – in transit' (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, pp. 134-35).

[418] Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, '"The Lost Object – Me": Notes on Endocryptic Identification' (1975), in Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, pp. 139-56 (p. 141).

burial site and stolen the contents of their crypt. There is, in addition, a crime lurking behind the scenes, only touched upon in the text; it forms part of the novel's 'shadowy ambience'. This crime is the suicide and accompanying unnameable shame of Dinah's father who, scorning the gun in his household's possession, threw himself under a train. Juxtaposed with this crime is the moral crime of infidelity: the secret love affair between Mrs Piggott and Major Burkin-Jones. These crimes are outside the scope of the text, but they nevertheless exist, and are to what Bowen may refer when she writes that: '[i]n short, the "musts" and "must nots" of effectual novel-writing entail embarkation, by the author, upon something far wider, deeper and longer than what, in print, *in statement*, he will eventually present'.[419] Bowen suggests that the novelistic '*statement*', the legal testimony, cannot ever cover everything – it will always exclude 'something', which will then appear as a textual 'nothing', a cryptic silence. Just as a secret demands the exclusion of others from the knowledge of its existence in order for it to be a secret, so too, the secret itself is excluded from the text. The secret's content, as it were, is less important than the fact that the secret itself exists, and what the secret does, a point *The Little Girls* might be seen to demonstrate in the way it effects a reinscription of the secret of the little girls. As Abraham and Torok point out:

> All secrets are shared at the start. Hence the 'crime' under consideration cannot be a solitary one, since it was turned into a secret. The 'crime' points to an accomplice, the locus of undue enjoyment, as well as to others who are excluded and, by dint of this same enjoyment, eliminated. In the absence of a concept of infringement, the 'crime' would entail no secret.[420]

---

[419] Bowen, *Afterthought*, p. 219.
[420] Abraham and Torok, 'The Topography of Reality', p. 158.

The link between the secret and the crime demands the presence of those who are included – the accomplices – and those who are excluded, or kept in the dark. The secret, then, is not only encrypted, it is itself a crypt, a site for inclusion and exclusion.

The return of the secret, the making present a promise of the past, functions as a legacy. The three women – who are now the posterity envisaged by the three little girls – become the inheritors of the crypt, those to whom their precious 'treasures' and 'fetters' are willed (*LG* p. 147). Castricano points out that this notion of indebtedness to the past is made particularly clear by the spectral and financial implications of the words 'revenant' and 'revenance':

> These words bring to mind the theme of one returned from the dead and all that this implies as well as how that theme is bound to a certain economy: they have affinities with *revenue* and with *revenir* – from the French to come back or to *amount* to and thus to the notion of (financial) 'return(s)' [...] What returns, however, is always linked to desire, which is what Derrida means when he says that the crypt is 'the *vault* of desire.' The (economic) function of a crypt, like a vault, is to keep, to *save*, and to keep *safe* that which would return from it to act, often in our place. Thus, wherever the theme of the living-dead arises, whether it be in so-called Gothic texts or in Derrida's works, the topic of revenance and desire cannot be separated from that of 'ghostly inheritance,' whether in the sense of what is received by descent or succession or what returns in the form of a phantom to tax the living.[421]

The little girls deposit in their coffer, their vault, their savings or promises for the future. Their later discovery that these material objects have been withdrawn, however, leaves open a site for haunting, for the 'ghostly inheritance' of the spectre of their childhood. While it might be seen that the impossibility of inheriting from oneself incites this temporal collapse, it seems that without these secret objects or prompts upon which they can rely, the girls' memories – aligned

---

[421] Castricano, *Cryptomimesis*, p. 9.

with reading desire – fill the empty space inside the coffer; it is thus through the crypt that the past irrupts into the present.

All three girls inherit, are haunted by, not only the legacy of their childhood, but the lives of their parents. Clare applies her father's military organization to the management of her business, while Sheila inherits in a more tangible sense her father's wealth (signified, in part, by the matching partner to the buried coffer, which stands in her large house) and his business. She secures this ownership through her marriage to the son of her father's business partner, whom she 'inherits' after the death of her first fiancé, her husband's elder brother. Dinah is bequeathed much of her mother's property but she is also heir, in a sense, to her mother's beauty, to which she is said to accede after the elder woman's death. Dinah is, I think, a victim of what Abraham terms a 'transgenerational phantom', an unspeakable ancestral secret of which she is unaware: 'what haunts are not the dead', Abraham notes, 'but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others'.[422] Mrs Piggott leaves in Dinah a crypt which encloses her unspoken secrets. 'Widows [...] run in families', Dinah observes, the only clue she gives to an awareness of her mother's private knowledge lying dormant within her (*LG* p. 249). More significant than Dinah's repetition of her mother's young widowhood, however, is the unspoken love affair which she shares with Frank, Major Wilkins. This relationship may be seen to unconsciously re-enact the clandestine passion of her mother and Clare's father, Major Burkin-Jones. Dinah's curious question to Clare, '[d]oes it ever seem to you that the non-sins of our fathers – and mothers – have been visited upon us?' also appears to point up an awareness of the ways in which

---

[422] Nicolas Abraham, 'Notes on the Phantom', p. 171.

these inherited secrets of the past have shaped and ghosted the lives of the three girls (p. 240). 'Although what haunts us is what we inherit', Castricano proposes, 'the legacy is always contradictory. Derrida suggests that it takes the form of a double bind: secrecy and choice'.[423] The secrecy inherent in this observation is made clear through the notion of transgenerational haunting; if one considers choice as its inverse, however, the power of the past for these women becomes even more significant, for they choose to return for their inheritance, they choose to value the legacy of memory. They have chosen to adhere to their promise, and thus the secret transaction remains valid. Yet, as I earlier pointed out, Bowen asserts that this novel is 'about the *involuntary* element in behaviour: "Chance, not choice"'.[424] Is it by chance that Dinah recalls the secret promise of the girls' childhood? Choice and chance – an 'involuntary element' – are not mutually exclusive, I suggest. Rather, it is the influence of memory – the behaviour of preservative repression and a memory thought to be forgotten – which, while masquerading as chance, actually shapes, makes choices for, the text.

The sway of repressed memory and a secret past upon Dinah is not unlike that which affects her mother, Mrs Piggott. Indeed, I suggest that it is in part Dinah's memories of her mother – or, more precisely, the traumatic memory of her death – which incites her passion for burial and disinterment. Both Dicey and her mother are haunted by memory; they have 'spun round themselves tangible webs, through whose transparency, layers deep, one glimpsed some fixed, perhaps haunted, other dimension' (*LG* p. 93).[425] While this might be seen as a reference

---

[423] Castricano, *Cryptomimesis*, p. 17.
[424] Notes for a public reading of *The Little Girls*.
[425] Later, Mrs Piggott and Dicey plan that they will together 'start on making a shell box' – the construction of crypts and boxes is in this way pointed up as a shared interest (*LG* p. 164).

to the secrets of their life before arriving at Feverel Cottage, the suggestion that both are 'haunted' by an 'other dimension' provides further evidence of the transgenerational phantom. As Ellmann has so insightfully noted, both the content and structure of the novel form a crypt around the dead mother, so that the repeated entombments of *The Little Girls* 're-stage the process of psychic incubism or encryptment in which the lost object is entombed alive within the ego'.[426] The absent presence of World War One, part of the gap between the two time periods of the novel, forms a crypt that houses the lost, beloved mother (and, to recall my discussion in Chapter One, a kind of wounding of the text).[427] That is, although Mrs Piggott – who does 'nothing by halves' – plays a relatively minor part in the text of the novel, she cannot be overlooked (*LG* p. 95). The value Bowen places on latent content and 'shadowy ambience' is pointed up by the assertion that '[t]o disturb Mrs Piggott once she was *in* a novel was known to be more or less impossible' (p. 94). Mrs Piggott, the dead mother, is a dead weight in the crypt of *The Little Girls*.

> 'Did you ever wish she was not there?'
> 'Well –'
> 'Did you ever hate her?'
> 'My mother? No, never,' Clare said. That was that.
> '*I* liked her,' said Dinah. 'She was nice to me, and friendly to Mother.'
> Clare said vaguely: 'Went out of her way to be.' (p. 240)

This section of dialogue is one example of how unwritten content 'expands in the reader's mind'.[428] Dinah's questions to Clare imply that she herself hates her mother, wishes 'she was not there'. It is precisely because of her love for her mother that she has encrypted her, and is unable to be rid of her. Also implicit

---

[426] Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 199.
[427] Ellmann sees the dead mother to be, as in *The House in Paris*, 'incubed in the central flashback' (ibid., p. 177).
[428] Bowen, *Afterthought*, p. 216.

here is the girls' knowledge of the secret affair between Clare's father and Dinah's mother, for Clare's final comment suggests that her mother, too, knew of her husband's infidelity, yet performed ignorance when confronted with his mistress.

It is not only mothers to whom secrets are tied, but also the novel's fathers. '*We are dead, and all our fathers and mothers*' (p. 147); the chant of the little girls as they bury the coffer at once mimics a funeral and a disinterment. It is the inclusion of their 'fathers and mothers' in this vow, however – fathers and mothers who are not only dead like the little girls, but who are themselves the little girls – which is so striking, for it underscores their importance for the text. In particular, Dinah's revelation of the secret object she placed in the coffer may be seen to be tied to the 'shadowy ambience' of her father and his early death. It is not until very late in the novel that Dinah confesses her unnameable object to be a gun she 'robbed' from her mother's glove drawer (p. 248). In terms of Oedipal structures, the implications of taking the gun, a phallic object she supposes to have once belonged to her father from its highly feminine hiding-place are clear enough; what I find more intriguing is why Dinah should choose this object for burial in the coffer.[429] Jane Gallop finds it an 'offensive "fact"' that 'the phallus has unreasonable privilege. It is difficult not to want to dismiss and bury something so unreasonable, not at least to demand from the phallus a reason for its rule'.[430] In her burial of the gun, phallic substitute for her father's presence – 'a thing no widow should be without' – Dinah may be seen to demonstrate her resistance to war and to a patriarchal order that threatens to destroy the idyll she shares with her beloved mother (*LG* p. 248). In burying or pushing aside the perils

---

[429] See also Hanson, 'Little Girls and Large Women', p. 193.
[430] Jane Gallop, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction*, Language, Discourse, Society (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 21.

of war and of the father, Dinah also resists the inclusion of the man who represents both of these – the soldier, Major Burkin-Jones – within the mother-daughter family unit. Her rejection of the father and patriarchal law which decrees that the '"product" of sexual union, the child, shall belong exclusively to the father, be marked with his name', is later reiterated by her refusal of her name, changing 'Diana' to 'Dinah' once an adult.[431] Her childhood nickname, 'Dicey', also betrays an underlying uncertainty surrounding not only her own name, but the name of the father, for as Sheila wonders, '[s]upposing [...] she never did have a father, at the best of times?', and Dinah's only reply to the question '[w]hat's your father?' is a blunt, '[h]e's dead' (*LG* p. 41, p. 111). The burial of the pistol may thus be seen as an attempt to erase this uncertainty from her background and in this way to subvert the idea of woman-as-crypt and to control the encroaching patriarchal order.

This resistance to the law of the father is also made evident by the 'Unknown Language' in which the girls write their message to the imagined inheritors of the coffer. The cryptic letter to posterity could be read as another instance of the ideal literary object and as an example of *écriture feminine*, writing the bodies of the little girls into the future. Through the creation of their own language and a message written in Clare's blood – the ink of her female body – the girls seal the box with a feminine authority designed to contain the patriarchal symbols they place inside. The secret objects of the coffer may be seen to signify their rejection and burial of this order. That is, Dinah's pistol removes her father's symbolic presence from her relationship with her mother; Sheila's burial of a sixth

---

[431] Ibid., p. 71.

toe removed at birth demonstrates her defiance of approved notions of feminine beauty; and Clare's copy of Shelley places out of sight a phallogocentric language which might influence her own practice of *écriture feminine*.

> Clare locked herself up again, more violently, into the Unknown Language, in a wedge-shaped box-room inside one of the gables, under a spike. The place was lit by panes of glass in the roof: when nothing but night came through those, she had to stop. Downstairs, she could have found a bit of candle. But downstairs was all party voices and, worse, laughter. (p. 145)

Clare encrypts herself 'into the Unknown Language', and in an aptly termed 'box-room', imitating the later entombment of the letter itself.[432] She works under a phallic spike, signifier of a language exemplified by Shelley, as a reminder of that which she must escape. Clare refuses, however, to work by the light of a candle, or to explain her activity to her father, who 'wouldn't' – indeed, couldn't – 'understand' (p. 145). Sheila and Dinah's fear that they too will not understand the message to which their names are signed means that tied to this secret language is another promise, a vow made by Clare that her words are as good as her word: '[d]on't invent it so's it's unknown to *us*, though: you swear and promise? We must know what what we have said is' (p. 115). The three girls must trust one another's sincerity in a cryptic and exclusively feminine language.

Dinah, on the other hand, struggles with an insufficient language haunted by secrets, amendments and lacunae:

> For here (and certainly fresh since yesterday) was a wad of thin, crumpled sheets in her handwriting – scarred with erasures, corrections, inserts, loops, brackets, arrows, marginal scrabblings. And all (that was, to judge

---

[432] Francis, 'unable to be in the Secret Service', also encrypts his secret writing twice over, writing it 'in an unbreakable code' and then burying it 'among the bowels of plumbing under the pantry sink' (*LG* p. 26). Mrs Piggott, too, buries a secret letter (the contents of which are never revealed) beneath her own body: 'Mrs Piggott got off the sofa; chiefly to disinter a letter on which she'd till now sat. She put the letter away in her little desk' (p. 102).

> by the first glance) saying, or attempting to say, the same thing, here or there with omissions or variations. (p. 27)

While for Clare, words and tangible text are of the greatest importance, in examples of Dinah's writing – the drafts of her newspaper advertisements and her later letter to Clare – it is the gaps and corrections which are most telling. The silences, the 'shadowy ambience' within Dinah's language, and her aggression towards the text, speaks more powerfully than words the ghosts of her past, and points up the crypts of her traumatic memory. Gabriele Schwab notes that unspoken secrets can be seen to slowly destroy 'the continuity of psychic life':

> Lives become shadow lives, simulacra of a hollowed-out normality. In this way, the buried ghosts of the past come to haunt language from within, always threatening to destroy its communicative and expressive function.
>
> Attacks on language are the material manifestations of attacks on memory, and yet it is language that preserves traces of the destroyed memory: this is the paradox of writings from the crypt.[433]

Through the 'breakdown in language' prevalent in Bowen's later fiction, *The Little Girls* seeks to demonstrate the spectral power of traumatic memory to infiltrate the present.[434] Language itself becomes a crypt, each word enclosing, haunted by, unfolding repetitions of latent meaning.

What I have suggested here is that *The Little Girls* may be seen to think through the ways in which the crypt enables us to consider how the structures of traumatic memory and of literature shed light on each other. Bringing contemporary critical thought on cryptomimesis into dialogue with *The Little Girls* allows us to evaluate the interactions of time and identity in narrative, as well as the ways in which we might think about secrecy in literature in terms of a surface-depth model. These ideas have also enabled an examination of what this

---

[433] Gabriele Schwab, 'Writing Against Memory and Forgetting', *Literature and Medicine*, 25.1 (2006), 95-121 (p. 103).
[434] Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 197.

novel has to say about the repression of trauma and its manifestation in language, as well as the ways such disruptions to linear temporality might be represented in narrative. The present of *The Little Girls* is structurally and textually haunted by the secrets and promises of the past, suggesting that literature, the 'ideal literary object', is best thought about as a combination of surface and depth, of secrecy and visibility, of text and shadow. Unpacking the cryptic and cryptomimetic structures set up by *The Little Girls* not only sheds light on this novel, but also provokes an unsettling of our thinking about the crypt itself, and indeed, about how we can and do read literature.

9

However:

Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes

The future, as we know, will resemble the past in being the result, largely, of a concatenation of circumstances. Many of our best moments, as well as our worst, are fortuitous. (*ET* p. 301)

The truth, what I always have difficulty getting used to: that non-telepathy is possible. Always difficult to imagine that one can think something to oneself [*à part soi*], deep down inside, without being surprised by the other, without the other being immediately informed, as easily as if it had a giant screen in it, at the time of the talkies, with the remote control [*télécommande*] for changing channels and fiddling with the colours, the speech dubbed with large letters in order to avoid any misunderstanding. For foreigners and deaf-mutes. [...] Difficult to imagine a theory of what they still call the unconscious without a theory of telepathy.[435]

However. Simultaneously 'deadly', 'hopeless', 'shutting-off', as Iseult Arble describes it, and yet unfinished, dragging with it the ghost of an ellipsis, an open space of continuation (*ET* p. 64). In this single word, this word that causes Iseult – that causes the text – such distress, is made manifest the work of the novel itself. The 'however' of Eva is a 'slippery fish' (p. 213). In *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes*, what was to be her final novel, Bowen disrupts all that has come before; 'the scene', Austin asserts, 'has indeed changed'.[436] Eva's repeated 'misbegotten' 'however' provokes these logical and temporal disorientations, as *Eva Trout* and Eva Trout audaciously mimic and manipulate the 'hopeless', thought-dead past: 'Eva went to the dead clock, prised its glass face open and stood moving the

---

[435] Jacques Derrida, Telepathy', trans. by Nicholas Royle, *Oxford Literary Review*, 10.1-2 (1988), 3-41 (pp. 13-14).
[436] Austin, *Elizabeth Bowen*, p. 87.

hands round to imaginary hours' (*ET* p. 64, p. 149). *Eva Trout* simultaneously makes possible the future whilst utterly refusing it in a violently unambiguous, unchanging final scene (p. 301). This is the conclusive set-piece to a narrative formed by (changing) screens and stills, from the castle which looks 'as though cut out, flat, from a sheet of cardboard', and its rooms which 'began in a cardboard way to belong to history'; to Constantine, who seems as if he is a 'figure cut from some picture but now pasted on to a blank screen'; as well as the two-dimensional representations of humanity in the National Portrait Gallery, all 'pictures' and 'images'; and the television screen which nightly sits 'flickering [Eva and Jeremy] to sleep [...]. From large or small screens, illusion overspilled on to all beheld' (p. 5, p. 53, pp. 40-41, p. 216, p. 208). The novel shuffles each scene into place, screening the narrative through the words on the page. Such screens, with their subtitles for 'foreigners and deaf-mutes', Derrida tells us, may be seen as analogous to the process of telepathy, providing a means of practising unconscious communicative clarity, of displaying thought.[437] To screen, however, is not only to show, but to hide. The changing stills, screens and scenes of *Eva Trout*, then, point up the processes not only inherent in telepathy, but also in lying; and in the sense that the psyche may be said to hide or to lie about the presence of trauma, the novel's changing scenes also condition traumatic memory.

Eva's mishandling of 'however' throughout the text foreshadows her son, Jeremy's, mishandling of the revolver at the novel's end, for both set in motion expectation of the future, whilst underscoring its 'deadly' uncertainty. Syntactical breaches in Eva's speech might also be seen to enact Derrida's declaration that 'I

---

[437] Derrida, 'Telepathy', p. 14.

posthume as I breathe', as the language of Eva Trout and of *Eva Trout* propels us towards the moment of death for the heroine and for the narrative; yet even while Eva's corpse lies still warm, her life may be said to continue in Jeremy, in a Derridean act of 'posthuming', of immortalization, which makes what Cixous calls 'liars of life and death'.[438] Eva's 'dead body' weights the final sentence of Bowen's final novel, immovable and insurmountable, while she lies, still, interred within the silent tomb of Jeremy, who 'was to be everything I shall not be', he who will survive her, the child, the issue, who shall carry on her name (*ET* p. 109, p. 220).

At the heart of the novel lies a lie: from where (and from whom) did Jeremy appear? *Eva Trout* locks away such secrets and its unspoken traumas – lies are elaborately constructed to hide these truths, to screen them from discovery. Like its characters, the novel hypnotizes, working to persuade or divert the reader away from these crypts, to swallow, instead, its lies. In reading *Eva Trout*, not only is one required to contend with the artificiality of a fictional narrative, and with the gaps and lacunae inherent in traumatic memory, but to remain aware – to keep in mind, or to remind oneself – of Eva Trout's and of *Eva Trout*'s anacolutha, their breaches of grammatical sequence. Eva's anacolutha, I think, figure the disruptive properties of the writing of trauma. That is, they call into question the ethics of narrative and its claim to realist representation as the anacoluthic lie reminds the reader that the novel one voraciously swallows is (perhaps), a fiction, and that what one had taken for fact is, in fact, uncertain. This is the kind of 'recognition of the danger inherent in all fiction-making' which

---

[438] Jacques Derrida, in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington (1991; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 26; and Cixous, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida*, p. 58.

Chessman asserts is at work across Bowen's fiction; '[s]tories are', she says, 'quite simply, untrue; they capture us [...] in their nets'.[439] In *Eva Trout*, even life and death are shown to be liars. In this chapter, I want to consider how a Derridean consideration of telepathy reveals how *Eva Trout* encourages the reader to 'sense' when, to borrow a recurring pun of the novel, something 'fishy' is going on, and moreover, what this kind of mind-reading might have to do with the writing of trauma.

Eva Trout is divided into two sections: the first, 'Genesis', takes place in the months preceding and shortly after Eva comes into her inheritance, at the age of twenty-five; the second, 'Eight Years Later', sees her return to England with her eight-year-old son, Jeremy. Eva was orphaned young: her mother, Cissie, died in an aeroplane crash while attempting to elope when Eva was an infant; her father, Willy, a wealthy businessman, committed suicide in Eva's adolescence. Since then, Eva has been left in the legal care of a 'wicked guardian', her father's former lover, Constantine Ormeau (*ET* p. 72, p. 103). 'Genesis' begins with Eva's departure from Larkins, the home of Iseult and Eric Arble, for reasons never made quite clear except that, she says, 'I cannot stay much longer where I now am' (p. 25). She takes possession of a large house in Broadstairs and fills it with electrical appliances – 'examples of everything auro-visual on the market this year' – before she breaks the news to Iseult that she is 'having a little child', and leads the elder woman to believe that the infant has been fathered by her own husband, Eric (p.

---

[439] Harriet S. Chessman, 'Women and Language in the Fiction of Elizabeth Bowen', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 29 (1983), 69-85 (p. 69).

124, p. 128). The narrative propels forward six months; now in the United States, Eva mysteriously adopts not an illegitimate, but rather an illegal child.[440]

Eight years later, Eva returns to England accompanied by this child, Jeremy. Eva proposes marriage to her old friend, Henry Dancey, and although Henry initially refuses her, he does agree to stage a sham wedding departure at Victoria station, before once again changing his mind at the climactic moment and declaring Eva '[m]y love, my sister' (*ET* p. 297).[441] In the novel's final moments, just as the couple are about to set off, Jeremy dashes towards Eva holding a revolver which, wrapped in brown paper and string, has been passed from pillar to post throughout the novel (in a continuation of the post of *A World of Love*), and shoots his mother dead. In its juxtaposition of death and life, of the heavy, still warmth of Eva's 'dead body' (Bowen's last words, as it were) and of Jeremy, who 'could not stop running on', this final (un)changing scene simultaneously forecloses the idea of a future and implies the possibility of immortality, of endless movement, helplessly propelled in a perpetual cycle of time, and of thought, in which, 'we know', both past and future arise from an inextricable 'concatenation of circumstances' (*ET* p. 301, p. 302).

However: in Eva's vocabulary this word is 'pompous, it's unnatural-sounding, it's wooden, it's deadly, it's hopeless, it's shutting-off – the way *you* use it! it's misbegotten!' (p. 64). That is, Eva fails to use 'however' as a logical conjunction, as a link to a following (if contradictory) idea. 'However' leads one to expect: it hangs, bating our breath. Yet Eva's 'however' is 'deadly', it 'shut[s]-

---

[440] The appearance of the child is anticipated at the beginning of the chapter by the inclusion of the Christmas carol 'Silent Night', where ellipses do the work of the lines 'round yon virgin, mother and child' (*ET p.* 139).

[441] There is a slippage here between Henry's love for Eva and for his dead sister, Louise, 'my familiar' (*ET* p. 165).

off' our expectation of continuing speech, the connection of one thought to another that Iseult describes (p. 61). The 'however' of *Eva Trout* and of Eva Trout is at once expectant and fallow (like, indeed, Eva herself), at once both and neither. 'However' says and does two things at once. It is as if, notes Claire Connolly, the novel's syntax is 'afraid to settle into fluency or to make itself at home in language'.[442] Eva's mishandling of 'however' foreshadows Jeremy's mishandling of the revolver at the novel's end – his own 'however' to Eva's narrative – for both, while 'deadly', also set in motion an expectation of the future, the desire to know, that is, what happens next.[443] Indeed, this notion of an uncertain future is introduced in the novel's opening scene, when the Dancey children consider the limits of Eva's presence; here, 'however' carries across and brackets two sentences, while the tentative 'perhaps' and the ellipses which follow the thought reinforce her indecision: '*How* long, they wondered, would this go on for? For ever and *ever*? Perhaps not . . .' (*ET* p. 4; my emphasis). *Eva Trout* frustrates this readerly longing for narrative continuity, for all of the events of the novel involve coming in after the fact, as it were, so that the reader never witnesses, for example, why Eva and the Arbles no longer see eye-to-eye, the breakdown of Iseult and Eric's marriage, or Eva's adoption of Jeremy.[444] Indeed, like so much of the novel's correspondence, it seems as if we are always arriving, always 'changing scenes', a moment too late. Narrative omniscience is refused in *Eva Trout*, and in this way carries on from the style and secrecy of *The Little*

---

[442] Claire Connolly, '(Be)Longing: The Strange Place of Elizabeth Bowen's *Eva Trout*', in *Borderlands: Negotiating Boundaries in Post-Colonial Writing*, ed. by Monika Reif-Hülser, ASNEL Papers 4 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 135-43 (p. 137).
[443] See also Ellmann, *The Shadow Across the Page*, p. 210.
[444] See also Sinéad Mooney, 'Unstable Compounds: Bowen's Beckettian Affinities', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 52.3 (2007), 238-56 (p. 254).

Girls. Moreover, this novel might be seen as a 'however' to Bowen's body of work that refuses our desire for a final conclusive statement, while simultaneously deconstructing and destabilizing all that precedes it, or as Bennett and Royle state, '*Eva Trout* can thus be seen as a conclusion and a convulsion of the entire Bowen *oeuvre*'.[445] These fluctuations are also present in the novel's ideas about identity, for its instability is, Corcoran notes, 'sometimes so underminingly severe as to make the novel's modes of characterization congruent with radical postmodern conceptions of the hollowing-out of subjectivity, as characters – and Eva herself in particular – are virtually devoid of all continuity, becoming sites traversed by endless mobilities of desire'.[446] It is this very discontinuity and perpetual desire that 'however' enacts in *Eva Trout*, and which draws out, I suggest, the fracturing and the melancholic yearning which characterizes the memory of trauma.

In the sense that these instabilities of identity (Eva is '[c]onstant in nothing' [*ET* p. 107]) and of 'however' undermine the (grammatical) ethics of narrative, Eva's language might be described as criminal, according to Iseult's warning that she 'shall fine you sixpence for each time you say "however"!' (p. 64). Not only is Eva 'wrong with the law' (of the father, for her child has no father, or rather, she is his father, or her own father is her child's father), but she is wrong with the word, the patriarchal laws of language which Iseult, 'the expert in English', upholds (*ET* p. 27, p. 166).[447] Eva's language is thus said to be outside the limits of correct or trustworthy speech, and to be encroaching on the terms of

---

[445] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 143. See also Corcoran, *The Enforced Return*, p. 135; and Mooney, 'Unstable Compounds', p. 251.
[446] Corcoran, *The Enforced Return*, p. 128.
[447] Eva's sense of guilt regarding this trespass of the law is demonstrated by her reading of a passage of the 'Gideon Bible' just prior to her receipt of Jeremy: '"*This is the law*," she read' (*ET* p. 154).

falsity and of the lie. The misuse of the word 'however' becomes a lie when it implies the qualification, continuation or justification of a point which never arrives, so that that in which the reader is led to believe never occurs. And to read into the lacunae which haunt 'however' is to put into practice a form of textual telepathy, an unwritten and unspoken exchange between author and reader which is nevertheless loaded with meaning. 'However', in other words, replicates and sets in motion the significant themes of the novel and of Bowen's late fiction: lies, telepathy and the interactions of reading and writing.

***

The novel posits in Eva and Iseult opposing temporal concerns; that is, while the younger woman more often looks to the future, Iseult is caught up in the past. Eva doesn't look back; twice, she explodes with incredulity at the very suggestion: '"[*b*]*ack*"! – *I* never go *back*!' (*ET* p. 7, p. 17, p. 60, p. 101). Hurt by Iseult's rejection of her love, Eva believes that the older woman 'sent me back [...] sent me back again – to be nothing' (p. 203). Iseult, too, has watched Eva disappear into her propensity for 'amnesia': '[u]nder this roof she's gone steadily back, back, back till of even the Eva there was there is not a trace' (p. 85, p. 95). The past for Eva, then, is synonymous with nothingness, vacuity, as Iseult recognizes when she states, 'for her I'm over, I'm a thing of the past, and what's that to Eva?' (p. 96). But Eva's suggestion that she record a conversation with Iseult is met with a flat refusal. For the latter, it is not posterity that is of interest, but the return of the past, and moreover, not only of looking back, but of hearing back: '[h]ow curious, yes, how very curious', Iseult remarks to Eva of her tape recorder, 'if you'd had that thing years ago, when I knew you. What should we think of the

playbacks, I do wonder?' (pp. 126-27). The appeal of such a device lies, for Iseult, in its ability to represent the past just as it was, untainted by subjectivity, as she declares: '[h]ow I should like to play that scene over again: I should get a better grip on it next time' (p. 126). Listening in, or eavesdropping on the past, a kind of belated understanding, is made possible by Eva's sophisticated instruments.[448] Eva's instruments thus figure the temporal disruption and deferred action of the Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* – the sense, that is, that such a return would be 'out of date' (*ET* p. 245). Elsinore's return to the narrative, and to Eva's life, for example, is conditioned by this kind of belatedness; in fear of being 'late by a minute' for her rendezvous with the child that will be Jeremy, Eva laments: '[y]ou came back too late, Elsinore. I cannot. You came at the wrong time' (p. 154). While Eva remains '[s]topped at an intersection' – stilled at the crossroads of going back or 'speed[ing]' forward – Elsinore and the past lose out to the future when the repressed, the 'waiting thought', returns ('leap[s]') too late (*ET* p. 154).[449] While for Iseult the tape recorder is an instrument concerned with the past, for Eva a recording is directed towards the future: '[i]t has recorded, "Not on any account." And it now records me saying, "It has recorded, 'Not on any account'"' (*ET* p. 126). The dizzying prospect of an infinite regress of electronic recording implies continuity, a momentum or forward-looking (a forward-hearing?), as well as the possibility of living-on, of the immortal encryption of Eva's voice, preserved for

---

[448] Eva's awareness of eavesdropping is made manifest when she is expecting (the telephone call regarding) her child: '[g]oing by, she shut the door of the bathroom, lest there be ears there' (*ET* p. 154).

[449] Even Eva's future is capable of running late: a conversation 'on the really rather momentous subject of Eva's future, had waited to get itself going till the last minute' (*ET* p. 194). Iseult 'had come too late on the scene' to have any influence upon Eva's speech, Constantine resigns himself to being behind schedule, pointing out that '[l]ate-comers can't be choosers', and at the novel's conclusion, Eva worries that she has arrived too late (p. 10, p. 108, p. 294).

posterity, and is a question that echoes or records, hears again, the work of *The Little Girls*.

The repetition of trauma is enacted within the text until the devastating finality of Bowen's parting words on the platform of Victoria Station. Jeremy's 'performance', or 'game' played out in this closing scene ties up the loose threads of the narrative and the traumas – the losses, disappearances, misplacements and afterthoughts – by which it has been driven (p. 298). I suggest that it is possible to read *Eva Trout* as an irrevocable game of *fort-da*, as described by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.[450] Caruth explains that this game

> . . . does not ultimately involve a symbolic representation of the mother's pleasurable return, but repeats, in a kind of stammer that interrupts its story, the painful memory of her departure. [...] What is most surprising in the child's game, however, is that this reenactment of reality in the game places repetition at the very heart of childhood, and links the repetition to a creative act of invention.[451]

In *Eva Trout*, the symbolic game is present in the stammering and amnesia which 'overcome' Eva when Eric visits her, but Iseult, the mother-figure, does not; the latter fails to return after she has been rejected, cast away (*fort!*) by Eva (*ET* p. 85). The 'creative act of invention' that Jeremy represents (in the sense that the story surrounding the child's procreation is a lie), might then be tied to the repetition of these traumatic departures, as the news of Eva's forthcoming child is enough to drive Iseult away once again. These reverberations of maternal loss begin – for *Eva Trout*, at least – with the 'unspeakable end' of Cissie Trout; they

---

[450] In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud describes watching his grandson throw a spool on a string from his cot and pulling it back over and over, calling 'fort' (gone) as he threw it and 'da' (here) as it returned. Freud interprets this as a reenactment of the traumatic departure and pleasurable return of the child's mother (see 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', pp. 224-26).

[451] Cathy Caruth, 'Parting Words: Trauma, Silence, and Survival', in *Acts of Narrative*, ed. by Carol Jacobs and Henry Sussman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 47-61 (p. 48).

continue within the fraught relationship of Eva and Iseult; they haunt Eva's traumatic memory of her resistance to separation from Elsinore ('*Gone, gone.* [...] *Go away again. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?*' [*ET* p. 142]); and they finish, finally, with Jeremy's ironic vengeance, forcing permanent departure on the mother who proposes to desert him (p. 34). The act of casting away and returning to the mother-figure, which has been described and enacted again and again in Bowen's work (perhaps most clearly in my discussions of *The Hotel* and *The House in Paris*, for example), is at its height in this last novel, where it reaches its terrible conclusion with the reunion of mother and child (*da*) occurring at the same time as the mother's departure (*fort*). The destruction of the mother at the moment of embrace both shatters and replicates the trauma which has repeatedly appeared in and conditioned Bowen's writing, bringing it to a theatrical climax before the curtain drops on the scene, on the novel, on Bowen's career and on Eva, who will 'remain gone' (*fort*) (p. 203). In the frieze of this final scene – a 'stage, or platform' from which no-one departs – the reader is unable to part from death. Like Jeremy, the reader is presented with the dead weight of this maternal corpse, so that one cannot move for 'fall[ing] over', as we stumble and stammer across the perpetuity of a trauma that will not die, that will survive itself, and that will live on posthumously (*ET* p. 298, p. 302).[452]

Yet, in Eva's 'misbegotten' 'however', even the possibility of a future is a lie, for although it implies continuity, suggesting there is more to come, she fears that 'at the end of it all you'll find out that I have nothing to declare' (*ET* p. 64).

---

[452] The impossibility of surmounting Eva, the dead mother, is supported by Corcoran, who rightly points out that Jeremy 'is, of course, with a terrible irony, sealing his own fate as one final orphaned child in the work of Elizabeth Bowen' (*The Enforced Return*, p. 136). In fact, it is ultimately Eva, rather than Jeremy, who is 'an obstacle not to be overcome' (*ET* p. 222).

Indeed, 'at the end of it all', she does not 'declare', but rather queries; her final words, 'Constantine [...] what is "concatenation"?' not only make clear Eva's inability to understand 'concatenation', but to put it into practice, for these 'last words' represent a perpetually unanswered doubt which opposes the concatenation of thought (p. 301). It is not Eva who ultimately enacts an absence of speech, but Constantine: 'I have nothing to say. Nothing to declare. No statement' (*ET* p. 296).[453] The phrase '[n]o statement' suggests, if not an outright falsehood, then a reluctance to speak the truth, neither confirmation nor denial, thereby performing an evasion similar to Eva's 'manner of speaking [...] like a displaced person' (*ET* p. 10). But, if it is true that Eva 'had nothing *to* say that could not be said, adequately, the way she said it', so that whatever she does say cannot be pinned down, cannot be concatenated, it might be that all Eva has to say is a lie (p. 10). Conspiracy is, after all, 'the air natural to her'; indeed, what part of such a claim as 'I am a liar [...] I am not always', can one believe (p. 96, p. 248)?

An amnesiac's words are always already 'dubious', as Sinéad Mooney points out:

> The amnesiac subject, all sure grasp of the past dissolving, has the dubious freedom to rearrange ad nauseam the elements of a posited selfhood into some new form, the self becoming an endless series of such refashionings, or nobody at all, the fear that is behind Eva's endless spinning of lies, fictions, and fantasies.[454]

In this way, memory becomes bound up with questions of truth and of deception, and moreover, of the ethics of fictional narrative.

Indeed, Derrida asserts that 'like the self-identity of the subject, memory *is* or rather *must*, *should* be an ethical obligation: infinite and at every instant' –

---

[453] 'Nothing *is* final, I suppose', says Constantine, in a frustratingly indecisive, indefinite turn of phrase (*ET* p. 296). Further, both Eva and Constantine appear to have inherited or borrowed this trait of having 'nothing to declare' from Willy Trout, whose suicide 'left nothing more to be said' (p. 96).

[454] Mooney, 'Unstable Compounds', p. 253.

indeed, memory must survive, it must live on, still.[455] Eva's memory is inconstant, and her identity, as I have discussed, is unstable, almost anticipating Derrida's suggestion that the 'essential finitude of a discontinuous anamnesis inscribes ellipses and eclipses in the identity of the subject'.[456] Her failure to meet Derrida's ethical demand and moreover, the failure of the novel itself to do so – for such instabilities necessarily transfer to the title that is her name, a title shakily supported by its precarious foundation of 'changing scenes' – reminds us, once again, of the lies which permeate the text. It is as if one is thrust into the midst of 'the malicious lying of [Eva's] misleading dreams in which she was no one, nowhere', dreams that Eva even denies having: '[y]ou had curious dreams', Constantine remarks; 'I did not', Eva replies (*ET* p. 50, p. 108). The power of dreams and of narrative to be misleading occurs in three ways, as identified by Miller in the context of a discussion of Marcel Proust. Miller argues that the misleading power of narrative has to do 'with storytelling (in the double sense of lying and of narration), with memory as a precarious support of narrative continuity, and with anacoluthon's function in both storytelling and lying'.[457] In reading *Eva Trout*, not only is one required to contend with the artificiality of a fictional narrative, and with the gaps and lacunae inherent in traumatic memory, but to remain aware – to keep in mind, or to remind oneself – of the novel's, and of Eva's, anacolutha. Only in *Eva Trout*, in Eva's 'however', do such transgressions against language also become a crime committed against the text.

---

[455] Jacques Derrida, '"Le Parjure", *Perhaps*: Storytelling and Lying ("Abrupt Breaches of Syntax")', in Jacobs and Sussman, *Acts of Narrative*, pp. 195-234 (p. 197).
[456] Ibid., p. 201.
[457] J. Hillis Miller, *Reading Narrative* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), p. 149.

The implied future of the misuse of 'however', discovered to be a lie, calls into question the novel's internal realism.

To put it another way: the two greatest hoaxes or fictions of the novel are Eva's maternity and her marriage, so that she performs thereby, the construction of her (gender) identity. Jeremy, Bennett and Royle point out, 'is a simulacrum of a son', while the final fictional departure of the bridal tour 'draws together the text's theorization of fictionality, its dissolution of the novel. [...] [T]he entire scene is undecidably a *staged* event'.[458] Any prop for this last scene, the novel points out, 'could have been a fake' (*ET* p. 300). All is designed, for this performance, to '[look] more lifelike', although 'no life was more real than this' (p. 216, p. 300). Realism is, of course, a work of fiction, always a lie. Derrida confesses, however, that he prefers the word 'invention' to 'lie', precisely because

> . . . it *hesitates perhaps* between *creative* invention, the production of what is not – or was not earlier – and *revelatory* invention, the discovery and unveiling of what *already* is or finds itself to be there. Such an invention thus hesitates *perhaps*, it is suspended undecidably between fiction and truth, but also between lying and veracity, that is, between perjury and fidelity.[459]

I have pointed out that Jeremy is a (pro)creative invention; Eva's marriage, moreover, is an example of revelatory invention, thought to be a hoax but finally revealed as 'true' love. Eva herself, then, 'hesitates *perhaps*' between these two pillars of invention, her identity 'suspended undecidably between' the illegality or 'perjury' of her maternity and the 'fidelity' of her matrimony; perched, indeed, on the liminality of her 'however'.

Eva Trout might be seen (like Eric) as recidivist – that through its lies and textual transgressions it relapses into the offences of *The Little Girls* (*ET* p. 89).

---

[458] Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 141, p. 155.
[459] Derrida, 'Le Parjure', p. 202.

These crimes are at times literal – as, for example, when Jeremy is kidnapped by Iseult, and is earlier acquired rather shadily by Eva – or psychological, as when Eva suspects Iseult's identity to have been stolen: '[h]ad this *been* Miss Smith, or was she dead and somebody impersonating her?' (p. 212). Iseult does behave like a criminal, purposefully masking her identity, the scar that would betray her: '[t]he hair was dark, but worn in a bull fringe coming low down [...] so that one could not see what was underneath. One was not meant to? It was as though to hide something, some disfigurement, scar or burn or a birth-mark' (pp. 218-19). By hiding the identifying mark and by refusing to pin down what such a blemish might be ('some disfigurement, scar or burn or a birth-mark'), by both concealing and misrepresenting, both Iseult and the novel resist verisimilitude.[460] Just as Iseult hides the revolver, her illegal weapon, in the crypt-like boxes of Eva's property, falsely claiming that it belongs to the younger woman with the defiant assertion that '[i]t's no business of theirs what is inside', the novel embeds the possibility of a deadly truth within and behind a fictional narrative (*ET* p. 252). The novel's lies deny omniscience and protect what it is 'no business' of ours to know. Realism is revealed to be fraudulent: '[h]oaxed, were they? An unreal act collects round it real-er emotion than a real act, sometimes, [Henry] thought' (p. 293).

Realist fiction, then, performs a confidence trick on the reader by imbuing this 'unreal act' with 'real-er emotion'. Constantine's written words do this, Iseult recognizes: 'what a way to write, what garlands of affectation! Yet, to give him

---

[460] The difference between the two types of lies is made clear by Dr Bonnard: '[Jeremy] has not yet incurred the ability to lie. We must remember, he is on the eve of doing so. [...] So far, he has been able to conceal, not yet, however, to misrepresent' (*ET* p. 249). Being 'on the *eve* of doing so', suggests that he may learn this ability from his mother, Eva.

credit, this was quite a performance. This mannered manner of his was not quite the thing; no. Yet the ambiguities had one sort of merit, or promise – one was at least on the verge of the Henry James country' (pp. 27-28). This writing, however, merely performs the 'promise', as Constantine's 'affectation' of literature only shadows what Iseult sees as the 'real' writing of James. This is not the only letter given word-for-word in the text – letters, postcards, telegrams (and the 'ghastly parcel' that is the revolver, carefully wrapped in brown paper and string) are delivered back and forth throughout (p. 252). The form and content of the novel thus both enact the hypnotic power of story-telling, designed to convince the reader to believe in the truth or reality of this fiction, this 'unreal act'. Mr Dancey, whose novel is not yet complete, is perpetually caught in the redrafting of his written words, trying to capture his fictional world in its entirety but suffering for the realism of his art: '[y]ou remember he once was writing a book? Well, he still is. Every now and then, he comes up against something which makes him have to go right back and re-cast the whole thing from the beginning' (*ET* p. 262).[461] He is still writing, writing still, for his task is futile, Iseult gravely asserts: '[l]ife is an anti-novel' (*ET* p. 228). True realism is impossible, for we can never know the 'whole story', especially in a novel which insists upon delivering us to the destinations of its plot too late: '[i]f you'd ever been more than partially honest with me, if you'd ever given me anything like the whole picture, or whole story [...]. But perhaps there is no whole picture, or story', Iseult writes in a letter to Constantine (p. 229). Indeed, 'perhaps', there is not; an ambiguous admission which finally speaks the truth. Eva, the amnesiac, is unable to 'reassemble the

---

[461] Elsinore behaves similarly: she 'wrote and re-wrote the same long letter, which she read aloud, then tore up, then began again' (*ET* p. 50).

picture', to know the whole story, and so, neither can her reader. In this way, the text figures the problems of a memory shattered by death and trauma. When even writing within the novel is 'gestated' under the weight of the memorial of the dead, it is hardly surprising that life, or the 'real', is difficult to maintain, that Iseult's novel 'was born dead', and that we are ultimately faced with the dead weight of Eva Trout's and *Eva Trout*'s corpse; that is, with a writing of trauma (p. 118, p. 253). Yet *Eva Trout* survives, it posthumes, immortal, defying the death of textuality.

Such ghost-writing, as we might call it, draws on notions of telepathy, 'a concept and effect intimately bound up with writing and death, the spectral and unprogrammable'.[462] Henry's discovery of a verse written by his dead sister, Louise, in the flyleaf of her prayer-book, is not only figured as the 'talk of the dead', a letter or medium that crosses that 'thin' wall '[b]etween [the] dead and [the] living', but as an immortal and telepathic communication between past and present (*ET* p. 190).[463] Reading the writing of the past 'restored to Henry, for some reason, not so much Louise as the original savagery of loss'; such textual telepathy is more concerned with the return of (the repressed) 'real-er emotion' than it is with a conjuring of spirits (*ET* p. 281). In a (mind) reading of *Eva Trout*, then, I want to think about how telepathy begins to unravel or to build upon ideas about memory, especially the memory of trauma, and moreover, what it has to say about the novel's uncertain and undelivered future. Indeed, Jeremy's 'extra-sensory' communication with Eva forms another repetition of his *fort-da* game, present, Derrida observes, in the very word, 'telepathy':

---

[462] Nicholas Royle, 'The "Telepathy Effect": Notes Toward a Reconsideration of Narrative Fiction', in Jacobs and Sussman, *Acts of Narrative*, pp. 93-109 (p. 109).
[463] See Bennett and Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 147.

> *Fort: Da, tele*pathy against tele*pathy*, distance against menacing immediacy, but also the opposite, feeling [*le sentiment*] (always close to oneself, it is thought), against the suffering of distancing [*la souffrance de l'éloignment*] that would also be called telepathy.[464]

Eva and Jeremy's telepathy, then, simultaneously sympathetically joins them (*da*) and recalls the physical distance between them (*fort*), just as their final embrace both unites and destroys their bond. That dramatic conclusion seems predestined or predicted by narrative clairvoyance, by the description of Eva as 'gun shy', the small children playing with guns in the background of the Christmas-shopping scene, and the 'pocket-size toy revolver' Jeremy chooses as a present from Iseult (*ET* p. 81, p. 140, p. 274).[465] Moreover, Henry appears to see Eva herself as clairvoyant when he asks her, '[w]hat's supposed to be going to happen, Eva?' – to which her monosyllabic and illogical reply is '[w]hy?' (*ET* p. 260). The instabilities of question and answer (also a question) here repeat the uncertain future of Eva's 'however', and the '[w]hy, however?' of her response to Iseult's explanation of the process of thought (p. 61). Why should one think, or think of the future, into the future, Eva asks, while the reader's knowledge that she has no future beyond the text gives her words the eerie resonance of the speech of the dead.

Jeremy's powers of seeing make him a formidable reader of and in the text; he is able to '[look] more deeply into [...] images than [Eva] did. Torn skies, curdled waters, hieroglyphic smoke he had had a particular way of scanning',

---

[464] Derrida, 'Telepathy', p. 36.

[465] 'A more precise way of talking about the fact that fictional narratives or narrators seem to have knowledge of the future might be in terms of clairvoyance' (Royle, 'The "Telepathy Effect"', p. 97). Fate and destiny circumscribe *Eva Trout* – 'fate magnetizes all of us': Iseult 'seemed destined to have Eva'; Portman believes his meeting with Eva to be due to 'the hand of fate' or 'the mathematical probabilities of chance'; and Eva worries that in encouraging Jeremy to overcome his disability, she has 'diverted' his destiny (*ET* p. 9, p. 131, p. 260, p. 269).

while his mother cannot even read the familiarity of her own hand: '[e]xtending the palm of her right hand to be read by the flames, she leaned over the fate-lines in it uncomprehendingly' (*ET* p. 100, p. 207).[466] Indeed, Eva is at one time frightened to begin reading (*ET* p. 59). This betrays her amnesia; unable or unwilling to read a text, she similarly avoids an active examination of the past. Iseult, on the other hand, reads too much: 'I have lived through books. I have lived internally' (p. 96). Iseult has sustained herself, she has survived on and through writing, lived on and through stories – indeed, on and through Eva's lies. In a different context, Mary Jacobus points out the parallels between reading and incorporation or consumption, so that we might describe Iseult as a 'voracious reader'.[467] If it is true that reading 'is actually a method of taking someone else's thoughts inside oneself', or 'a way of eating another person's words', then Iseult swallows more lies than any other character of *Eva Trout*, too ready to believe others when they are telling stories.[468] Iseult might do better to direct at herself her admonishing question to Constantine, 'don't you think you've been reading too many stories?' (*ET* pp. 231-32). To be sure, books 'are not [...] to be simply gazed at', but by the same token, they are not to be swallowed whole or taken on face value (p. 59). It is fiction's task to hypnotize the reader into believing its stories, to persuade us of the truth of its lies. Iseult, however, is an uncritical reader of the fiction of *Eva Trout* and Eva Trout; this malleable subject is too

---

[466] Bennett and Royle term Jeremy a figure of reading (*Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel*, p. 143).
[467] Mary Jacobus, *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 20.
[468] Alix Strachey, 'Some Unconscious Factors in Reading' (1930), cited in Jacobus, *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading*, p. 29.

obsessed by Eva to see outside the covers of her fiction – *that* is 'the whole of the picture' (p. 254).

In this respect, fiction, the novel, parallels the performance of traumatic memory: both are defined by the appearance, or act of verisimilitude, when in truth, they are but a lie, '[n]othing hidden except what was in the books' (p. 60). Indeed, the very function of traumatic memory is to protect consciousness from the truth of the sorrow it encrypts, to keep even the secret of the trauma's existence. In one way, this necessitates lying to oneself – and believing it – describing the critical division between what we might call 'healthy' memory, and traumatic memory, so that the interaction of thought between these two states, still present within one mind, is made impossible. To return to Derrida's statement, to the 'difficulty' with which I began this essay, traumatic memory becomes concerned with the distances constructed within the psyche, and with the ability of a separated consciousness to communicate across its traumatic partitions. How is it that 'one can think something to oneself [...] deep down inside, without being surprised by the other'? How does the conscious mind remain unaware of the crypt, and how does its guardian protect the secret of trauma?

In his study of literature and telepathy, Royle makes use of the term 'cryptaesthesia' which, he explains, etymologically 'pertains to the perception (*aesthesis*) of what is hidden (*crypto*-)'.[469] The protective lies and distances of traumatic memory could be overcome by the practice of cryptaesthesia, the ability to sense that something is hidden and perhaps, to recover it. In this way, I suggest

---

[469] The word 'cryptaesthesia' was coined by Charlies Richet in the late-nineteenth century and is defined in the *OED* as '[a] supernormal faculty of perception, whether clairvoyant or telepathic' (Nicholas Royle, *Telepathy and Literature: Essays on the Reading Mind* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 60).

that the cryptaesthesia of *Eva Trout* works to resurrect the traumatic memories of *The Little Girls*. This is most clearly seen in the return of the (repressed) revolver to the narrative, and the repetitions of its burial and revival. Iseult searches for a site in which to inter the gun – requesting that Constantine keep it locked in his safe, before leaving it as an anonymous parcel among Eva's belongings (*ET* p. 251). Jeremy, however, digs it up, immediately sensing the presence of the carton or crypt, and determined to unearth the revolver – '[h]e did not require to dig deep; something immediately met his hands. The parcel was as weighty as it was curious; he bore it back with him to the sofa, where he sawed away at the heavily-knotted string with his little pocket-knife' – before reluctantly stowing it away once again in a drawer beneath a pile of gloves, recalling this same hiding-place from *The Little Girls* (pp. 287-88). In a similar way, and like Leopold in *The House in Paris* or Jane in *A World of Love*, he seeks to rummage through Iseult's mind: '[d]on't imagine he for a moment cared for me, but for that one flash – I was a walking strong-box he wanted to rifle' (p. 274). Indeed, her very words contain the revolver ('rifle') and crypt ('strong-box'). Jeremy wastes his time on Iseult, however, for she has 'undergone an emotional hysterotomy, and am the better' – since her (pro)creation, a novel, was 'born dead', her 'inside's gone' (p. 251, p. 253). It is not nothing that Iseult hides (she does, after all, disguise her face with a fringe), but it is at the same time *nothing*: the trauma of her emptiness and inability to produce even a fiction-child – either a novel, or an infant born from a lie. A cryptaesthetic reading of *Eva Trout*, then, points up the perception of these lies and lacunae in the text, and through the novel's concern with telepathy, leads us to sense its memory of trauma, the trauma of a certain nothing.

***

'All-in-all, what a literature – of what? Longing. The lyricism of forgetfulness. The nightmare of the frustrated passion' (p. 119). Bowen's writing may be seen to work towards the terrible conclusion of this last novel, its agony of '[l]onging', 'forgetfulness' and 'frustrated passion' that is finally attempted to be laid to rest in Eva's corpse. 'Still, you'd prefer me dead', Eva asserts, '[s]ilent forever, in my tomb'; indeed, her doom is to lie still, and to lie, still, interred within the silent tomb of Jeremy (p. 109). The novel's final words, its conclusive scene of Eva's 'dead body', are *Eva Trout*'s final 'however'; deathly still, Eva Trout ends while *Eva Trout* goes on. The novel thus survives the protagonist it endlessly revives for future readers, since in Bowen's corpus, '[m]ore has been buried than you know' (p. 111).

Postscript

'Still, you ought to get going.'
'Going?' he asked warily, with a frown.
'To wherever it is. To somewhere else.'
'That is not so simple,' he said, 'as you seem to think.'[470]

I posthume as I breathe.[471]

When Bowen died in 1973, she left, along with the partial draft of an autobiography, the first chapter of a novel, to be titled 'The Move-In'. Her literary executor published these with other collected writings posthumously as *Pictures and Conversations* (1974). This title, taken from the opening sentence of Lewis Carroll's work, *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), Brown notes, 'was significant, for the book would never have dealt with her own adult life, but only with images that her eyes had seen and with memories of things said to her'.[472] Bowen's autobiography, then, was planned not as a factual or historical rendering of her life, but as a work of memory, a personal work of subjectivity. In this final work, it might be seen, coheres Bowen's career-long concern with memorializing the past. But in this conclusion I do not want to depart from my discussion of Bowen's fiction towards a consideration of her autobiographical fragments. Rather, I want to think about the ways in which 'The Move-In', Bowen's fictional remains and a text neglected by critical appraisal, draws out the concerns of trauma and writing present throughout Bowen's oeuvre, and moreover, develops

---

[470] Bowen, *Pictures and Conversations*, p. 72.
[471] Derrida, in Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, p. 26.
[472] Brown, Foreword to *Pictures and Conversations*, p. viii. 'Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"' (Lewis Carroll, *'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There'* (1865; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 9).

these in the context of the posthumous voice. If it is true, as I have argued in the last chapter, that the conclusion of *Eva Trout* constitutes a stammering perpetuation of trauma and of death beyond which the text does not – indeed, can not – progress, then it follows that 'The Move-In' is a posthumous text in terms not only of the (dead) body of the author, and of Eva, her final heroine, but the (dead) body of her fiction. The fragment or ghost of 'The Move-In' remains, disrupting the stilled corpus of Bowen's fictional oeuvre. This thesis has explored the ways in which Bowen's fiction models and extends existing models of trauma theory and has investigated the intersections of trauma and writing in Bowen's fictional work, with particular emphasis on the ways in which this gives rise to an understanding of memory and of secrecy in narrative. In this conclusion, I suggest that the 'The Move-In' works as a postscript to Bowen's fiction, a belated addition that calls attention to the characteristics of writing after death, of writing after trauma.

This novel fragment describes the arrival of three friends at what appears to be an Anglo-Irish Big House, expecting hospitality from the aunt of an acquaintance they have made while travelling. However, the house at which they have arrived is not the home of 'Simon's' aunt. The group, out of fuel and out of money, resist the protestations of the woman who does live here, and at the chapter's suspenseful conclusion, suggest that they stay in the house's ominously 'uninhabited wing'.[473] Even in this short fragment, the text enacts a struggle between arrival and departure, between moving in and going away, between, in fact, life and death, hovering like 'a wisp of ectoplasm' called into being by a kind

---

[473] Bowen, *Pictures and Conversations*, p. 76.

of novelistic 'séance'.[474] Bowen's characteristic 'threshold' conclusion here instead works as an introduction to the novel; the effect produced is of a narrative unable to decide where to go, whether or not to begin. Bowen's writing, in 'The Move-In' and elsewhere is, as Cixous says of Carroll's,

> . . . a form of writing which doesn't settle in one place any more than a bird or an operation, but skips, flutters, moves, 'out of breath,' without trying to maintain sense or catch it, but moved by the curiosity – in the etymological sense of the word – which it feels about its own existence: the very writing questions itself about what it will possibly be able to say, what it's going to do, how far it's going.[475]

'Going?' This thesis has tried to show that in Bowen's work, this kind of breathless questioning of writing itself works as a traumatic deconstruction of its own function. Self-referential linguistic multiplicity and fracturing in Bowen's writing thus becomes at once a means of representing trauma in narrative, and a statement about the impossibility of doing so. In 'The Move-In', even as the novel's title promises entrance into the house, into the narrative, the text itself refuses and resists reading, it becomes conditioned by the impossibility of crossing a threshold. These visitors (and this text) are going nowhere. They audaciously unpack the boot of their car and strew their belongings (miscellaneous array of items – a 'lidless pot of ointment', 'a half-eaten banana', a broken watch, a seagull's wing – packed away, it seems, since *The Little Girls*) across the gravel. Their boot operates like Nicholas Royle's portmanteau, the 'question' of which 'is perhaps also that of the crypt'.[476] Recalling the secrecy of the ideal literary object which, I have argued, is part of the project of *The Little Girls*, it might be seen that 'The Move-In' works as a crypt for the earlier novel

---

[474] Ibid., p. 68.
[475] Hélène Cixous, 'Introduction to Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* and *The Hunting of the Snark*', trans. by Marie Maclean, *New Literary History*, 13.2 (1982), 231-51 (p. 234).
[476] Nicholas Royle, 'Portmanteau', *New Literary History*, 37.1 (2006), 237-47 (p. 243).

and, perhaps, for all of Bowen's fiction. Just as, as I have noted, the crypt describes both the structure and the space within, 'The Move-In' at once houses and constitutes the trauma of Bowen's writing. Like Cixous's breathless writing, 'a kind of portmanteau writing' may be seen as a 'familiar other name for deconstruction'.[477] The boot or portmanteau of 'The Move-In' thus becomes a model of the deconstructive work of Bowen's writing and, moreover, of the deconstructive work of the writing of trauma.

But 'The Move-In' will not spill. It operates as an abortive fragment. The chapter's final words, the woman's refusal of her unexpected guests' desire to stay, '[n]o – impossible!' come to signify absolute secrecy and a negation of narrative momentum.[478] Like the strangers' car, the novel has insufficient vitality, insufficient fuel, with which to go on. In spite of the precipitant movement of the novel's to-be title, the narrative chokes. Bowen, the car, the novel: out of breath. Impossible. If it is the case, then, that Bowen's writing may be seen to '[question] itself about what it will possibly be able to say, what it's going to do, how far it's going', that abrupt end to the fragment refuses to say or to do anything; the novel, like the visitors, will not go anywhere. Unfinished, 'The Move-In' becomes a statement of its own impossibility, of its own death, of that traumatic secret which, finally, cannot be spoken, that which 'escapes text'.[479] It is a fitting and logical conclusion to Bowen's writing of trauma that her work should expire in silence.

---

[477] Ibid., p. 241.
[478] Bowen, *Pictures and Conversations*, p. 76.
[479] 'The portmanteau comes to designate the double logic of the "escaping text" and what "escapes text"' (Royle, 'Portmanteau', p. 242).

By addressing Bowen's work in terms of its relation to trauma theory, this study has sought to fill a gap in existing criticism on Bowen through an extension, in particular, of studies by Ellmann, and by Bennett and Royle. The thesis has also sought to develop wider discussion of the nature of trauma, memory, and secrecy in literature, through an analysis of the ways in which memory and the past in Bowen's writing incorporate and are inflected by ideas about trauma and about narrative. In this process, the project found that Bowen's fiction simultaneously anticipates and complicates deconstructive and psychoanalytic models of trauma, as well as trauma's disruptive properties in reading and writing narrative. The thesis has found that Bowen's writing of trauma may itself be seen to constitute a model of deconstructive literary theory akin to the work of Derrida and Cixous; the present study thus draws contemporary trauma studies closer to such theory. Finally, the thesis has moved away from existing traditional paradigms of the writing of trauma in which such limit-events are treated only thematically or, if stylistically, fail to push beyond a traditional psychoanalytic mode of mourning and melancholia, wherein the narrative of traumatic memory moves from fragmentation to coherence and unity. It has proposed a means of thinking about the writing of trauma which ceases to emphasize the author, and instead posits a traumatization of text. The psychological, narratological, and linguistic effects of trauma in Bowen's fiction have been shown to complicate and extend those existing deconstructive and psychoanalytic models of trauma and literature, so that this thesis represents a critical intervention in contemporary trauma studies. The 'strangeness' of Bowen's writing so often noted in critical commentary has been shown to, in part, constitute the writing of trauma. That is, the close

deconstructive readings of Bowen's fictional oeuvre in this thesis have revealed the way in which Bowen's language is always and everywhere conditioned by trauma; the thesis thus might be seen to constitute a new means of reading trauma narratives.

I wrote, in the introduction to this thesis, of the nature of survival in Bowen's fiction. It seems that, in the final analysis, survival is the nature *of* Bowen's fiction; writing constitutes survival. 'The Move-In' is the posthumous postscript to Bowen's writing of trauma, an afterthought, a half-thought. It is not only her wartime fiction that, as Marina MacKay has recognized, is characterized by 'an ominous air of unfinished business', but rather, the whole body of her writing.[480] 'The Move-In' is a novel that is only a beginning; like the maid seen through the windows of the house, it is 'disembodied'.[481] And even as it calls attention to the traumatic characteristics of the posthumous text, torn off and inscribed by untranslatable death, 'The Move-In' might be described as a disembodied text, a ghostly posthumous narration by a disembodied voice that, going nowhere, insists upon its own survival.[482] 'I posthume as I breathe', writes Derrida – may as well have written Bowen. And '[t]here you have him then', asserts Cixous, 'he who dies at the top of his lungs, a buried-alive supernatural, who gets wind of a new definition of immortality through the magic of writing. A frenzy of activity. [...] He writes as he posthumes. The writing is his survivor, she [*l'écriture, f.*] survives *him*'.[483] Writing remains, houses one's remains, is one's

---

[480] MacKay, 'World War II, the Welfare State, and Postwar "Humanism"', p. 148.
[481] Bowen, *Pictures and Conversations*, p. 68.
[482] See, for example, Claire Raymond, *The Posthumous Voice in Women's Writing from Mary Shelley to Sylvia Plath* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), p. 221.
[483] Cixous, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida*, pp. 58-59.

remains. It makes 'liars of life and death'.[484] Bowen's writing is breathless writing, posthumous writing, deconstructive writing; Bowen's writing is the writing of trauma.

---

[484] Ibid., p. 58.

Bibliography

* References to items held in the Elizabeth Bowen Collection (TXRC98-A9) at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas at Austin, are given as 'HRHRC', followed by the box and file number.

Abraham, Nicolas, 'Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology' (1975), in Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, pp. 171-76

Abraham, Nicolas, and Nicholas T. Rand, 'The Shell and the Kernel', *Diacritics*, 9.1 (1979), 15-28

Abraham, Nicolas, and Maria Torok, 'The Topography of Reality: Sketching a Metapsychology of Secrets' (1971), in Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, pp. 157-61

---, 'Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation' (1972), in Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, pp. 125-38

---, '"The Lost Object – Me": Notes on Endocryptic Identification' (1975), in Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, pp. 139-56

---, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonomy*, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand, Theory and History of Literature, 37, ed. by Wlad Godzich, and Jochen Schulte-Sasse (1976; repr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986)

---, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Nicholas T. Rand, vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)

Acheson, James, and Sarah C.E. Ross, eds., *The Contemporary British Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005)

Adams, Timothy Dow, '"Bend Sinister": Duration in Elizabeth Bowen's *The House in Paris*', *International Fiction Review*, 7 (1980), 49-52

Agamben, Giorgio, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone, 2002)

Aiken, Joan, 'Demon Lovers', *Changing English*, 4.1 (1997), 67-79

Alvarez, A., *Night: Night Life, Night Language, Sleep, and Dreams* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995)

Ankersmit, Frank, *Sublime Historical Experience*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. by Mieke Bal, and Hent de Vries (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005)

Antze, Paul, and Michael Lambek, 'Forecasting Memory', in Antze and Lambek, *Tense Past*, pp. xi-xxxviii

---, eds., *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 1996)

Apter, Terri, *Altered Loves: Mothers and Daughters During Adolescence* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990)

Armstrong, Nancy, and Leonard Tennenhouse, eds., *The Violence of Representation: Literature and the History of Violence* (London: Routledge, 1989)

Ashford, David, 'Children Asleep in the Underground: The Tube Shelters of Brandt and Moore', *Cambridge Quarterly*, 36.4 (2007), 295-316

Ashworth, Ann, '"But Why Was She Called Portia?": Judgment and Feeling in

Bowen's *The Death of the Heart*', *Critique*, 28 (1987), 159-66

Auerbach, Erich, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. by Willard R. Trask, 50th anniv. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003)

Austin, Allan E., *Elizabeth Bowen*, Twayne's English Authors Series 123, ed. by Sylvia E. Bowman, rev. ed. (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1989)

Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (1958; repr. Boston, MA: Beacon, 1964)

Backus, Margaret Gayle, *The Gothic Family Romance: Heterosexuality, Child Sacrifice, and the Anglo-Irish Colonial Order* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999)

Balaev, Michelle, 'Trends in Literary Trauma Theory', *Mosaic*, 41.2 (2008), 149-66

Barthes, Roland, *S/Z*, trans. by Richard Miller. (1973; repr. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990)

---, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. by Richard Howard (1981; repr. London: Vintage, 2000)

Bates, Charlotte, 'Hotel Histories: Modern Tourists, Modern Nomads and the Culture of Hotel-Consciousness', *Literature and History*, 12.2 (2003), 62-75

Bayley, John, *The Short Story: Henry James to Elizabeth Bowen* (Brighton: Harvester, 1988)

Beauman, Nicola, *A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914-3* (London: Virago, 1983)

Beckett, J.C., *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976)

Begam, Richard, and Michael Valdez Moses, eds., *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899-1939* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007)

Belau, Linda, and Petar Ramadanovic, eds., *Topologies of Trauma: Essays on the Limit of Knowledge and Memory* (New York: Other, 2002)

Bell, Amy, 'Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 153-75

Bellamy, Elizabeth J., *Affective Genealogies: Psychoanalysis, Postmodernism, and the 'Jewish Question' after Auschwitz*, Texts and Contexts (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997)

Benjamin, Jessica, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (1988; repr. London: Virago, 1990)

Bennett, Andrew, 'Dendritic', *Oxford Literary Review*, 23 (2001), 71-97

---, 'Bowen and Modernism: The Early Novels', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 27-39

---, ed., *Readers and Reading* (London: Longman, 1995)

Bennett, Andrew, and Nicholas Royle, *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel: Still Lives* (London: Macmillan, 1995)

---, 'Torn-Off Senses', *Angelaki*, 3.3 (1998), 153-58

Bennington, Geoffrey, and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington (1991; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)

Berger, James, *After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999)

Bergonzi, Bernard, *Wartime and Aftermath: English Literature and Its Background, 1939-60*, Opus, ed. by Walter Bodmer, Christopher Butler, Robert Evans, and John Skorupski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Berman, Jessica, 'Ethical Folds: Ethics, Aesthetics, Woolf', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 50.1 (2004), 151-72

Bernard-Donals, Michael, 'In Memoriam: Levinas, the Holocaust, and the Immemorial', *Mosaic*, 40.3 (2007), 1-16

Bersani, Leo, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986)

---, *The Culture of Redemption* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990)

Bettelheim, Bruno, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (London: Penguin, 1976)

---, *Freud and Man's Soul* (London: Hogarth, 1983)

Bidney, Martin, 'Nostalgic Narcissism in Comic and Tragic Perspectives: Elizabeth Bowen's Two Fictional Reworkings of a Tennyson Lyric', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 33.1 (1996), 59-68

Blodgett, Harriet, 'The Necessary Child: *The House in Paris*', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 63-79

Bloom, Harold, Introduction to Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 1-11

---, ed., *Elizabeth Bowen* (New York: Chelsea House, 1987)

Bollas, Christopher, *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known* (London: Free Association, 1987)

Botting, Fred, *Gothic*, The New Critical Idiom, ed. by John Drakakis (London:

Routledge, 1996)

Bowen, Elizabeth, 'The Back Drawing-Room' (1926), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 199-210

---, *The Hotel* (1927; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987)

---, *The Last September* (1929; repr. New York: Anchor Books, 2000)

---, *Friends and Relations* (1931; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1943)

---, *To the North* (1932; repr. London: Vintage, 1999)

---, 'The Apple Tree' (1934), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 461-70

---, 'The Mulberry Tree' (1934), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 13-21

---, *The House in Paris* (1935; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976)

---, *The Death of the Heart* (1938; repr. New York: Anchor, 2000)

---, 'The Big House' (1940), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 25-30

---, 'A Love Story: 1939' (1941), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 497-511

---, 'Summer Night' (1941), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 583-608

---, 'Sunday Afternoon' (1941), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 616-22

---, 'Tears, Idle Tears' (1941), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 479-487

---, *Seven Winters: Memories of a Dublin Childhood* (1942; repr. London: Longmans, 1943)

---, *Bowen's Court*, Neglected Books of the Twentieth Century (1942; repr. New York: Ecco, 1979)

---, 'Notes on Eire', The National Archives, DO130/28, 1942

---, 'Mysterious Kôr' (1944), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 728-40

---, 'The Happy Autumn Fields' (1944), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 671-85

---, 'The Inherited Clock' (1944), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 623-40

---, Elizabeth Bowen, 'I Hear You Say So' (1945), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 751-57

---, 'Ivy Gripped the Steps' (1945), in Bowen, *Collected Stories*, pp. 686-711

---, Postscript to *The Demon Lover*' (1945), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 94-99

---, 'Out of a Book' (1946), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 48-53

---, Preface to *Uncle Silas*, by Sheridan Le Fanu' (1947), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 100-13

---, Letter to Daniel George, 2 June 1948, HRHRC 10.4

---, 'A Year I Remember: 1918', broadcast 10 March 1949, HRHRC 2.3

---, *The Heat of the Day* (1949; repr. New York: Anchor, 2002)

---, 'Outrageous Ladies' [1949-63], in *People, Places, Things*, pp. 379-83

---, *Collected Impressions* (London: Longmans Green, 1950)

---, 'Elizabeth Bowen and Jocelyn Brooke in Conversation', broadcast 3 October 1950, HRHRC 2.3

---, 'London, 1940' (1950), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 21-25

---, 'The Bend Back' (1950), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 54-60

---, *The Shelbourne* (1951; repr. London: Vintage, 2001)

---, 'The Cult of Nostalgia', broadcast 4 August 1951, HRHRC 2.3

---, Preface to *The Last September* (1952), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 122-26

---, 'The Art of Respecting Boundaries' (1952), in *People, Places, Things*, pp. 397-400

---, *A World of Love* (1954; repr. New York: Anchor, 2003)

---, *A Time in Rome* (1959; repr. London: Vintage, 2003)

---, Interview with John Bowen, William Craig, and W.N. Ewer, broadcast 11 September 1959, HRHRC 2.3

--, Preface to *Stories by Elizabeth Bowen* (1959), in Bowen, *The Mulberry Tree*, pp. 126-30

---, *Afterthought: Pieces About Writing* (London: Longmans, 1962)

---, *The Little Girls* (1963; repr. New York: Anchor, 2004)

---, *The Good Tiger* (1965; repr. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970)

---, *Eva Trout, or Changing Scenes* (1968; repr. New York: Anchor, 2003)

---, *Pictures and Conversations* (London: Allen Lane, 1974.)

---, *The Mulberry Tree: Writings of Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. by Hermione Lee (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986)

---, *The Collected Stories of Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. by Angus Wilson (London: Vintage, 1999)

---, *The Bazaar and Other Stories*. ed. by Allan Hepburn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008)

---, *People, Places, Things: Essays by Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. by Allan Hepburn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008)

---, Draft of Preface to *The Last September* (n.d.), HRHRC 7.2

---, Material for the *Broadsheet* (n.d.), HRHRC 1.5

---, Notes for a public reading of *The Little Girls* (n.d.), HRHRC 7.4

Braidotti, Rosi, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Brannigan, John, *Orwell to the Present: Literature in England, 1945-2000*, Transitions, ed. by Julian Wolfreys (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Brassard, Geneviève, 'Fast and Loose in Interwar London: Mobility and Sexuality in Elizabeth Bowen's *To the North*', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 18.3 (2007), 282-302

Breen, Mary, 'Autobiography as We Know It Now Is Artists' Work', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 110-32

Brewster, Scott, 'Death and the Dinner Party: Hospitality and Hungry History in Joyce and Bowen', *Angelaki*, 3.3 (1998), 59-68

Briggs, Julia, 'The Ghost Story', in Punter, *A Companion to the Gothic*, pp. 122-31

---, 'Resisting Nostalgia, Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', in Dowson, *Women's Writing*, pp. 29-37

Brison, Susan J., 'Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self', in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, ed. by Mieke Bal, Jonathan V. Crewe, and Leo Spitzer (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), pp. 39-54

Britzolakis, Christina, *Sylvia Plath and the Theatre of Mourning*, Oxford English Monographs, ed. by Christopher Butler, Stephen Gill, Douglas Gray, Emrys Jones, and Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999)

Brooke, Jocelyn, *Elizabeth Bowen*, Bibliographical Series of Supplements to *British Book News*, ed. by T.O. Beachcroft (London: Longmans, Green, 1952)

Brooke, Stephen, 'War and the Nude: The Photography of Bill Brandt in the 1940s', *Journal of British Studies*, 45 (2006), 118-38

Brooks, Peter, and Alex Woloch, eds., *Whose Freud?: The Place of Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000)

Brown, Spencer Curtis, Foreword to Bowen, *Pictures and Conversations*, pp. vii-xlii

Brown, Terence, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-2002*, 2nd ed. (London: Harper Perennial, 2004)

Buccleugh, Stephen Hamilton, 'The Dialogic of Narrative: The Use of Free Indirect Discourse in Elizabeth Bowen's "The Return"', *South Central Review*, 7.2 (1990), 31-39

Burgess, Anthony, 'Treasures and Fetters', *Spectator*, 21 February 1964, p. 254

Burrows, Victoria, *Whiteness and Trauma: The Mother-Daughter Knot in the Fiction of Jean Rhys, Jamaica Kincaid and Toni Morrison* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Buse, Peter, and Andrew Stott, 'A Future for Haunting', in Buse and Stott, *Ghosts*, pp. 1-20

---, eds., *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1999)

Butler, Hubert, 'Elizabeth Bowen: From *Escape from the Anthill*', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered*, pp. 15-17

Butler, Judith, 'Giving an Account of Oneself', *Diacritics*, 31.4 (2001), 22-40

---, 'Bracha's Eurydice', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21.1 (2004), 95-100

---, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004)

Byatt, A.S., Introduction to Bowen, *The House in Paris*, pp. 7-16

Cahalan, James M., *The Irish Novel: A Critical History* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988)

Calder, Robert L., '"A More Sinister Troth": Elizabeth Bowen's "The Demon Lover" as Allegory', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 31.1 (1994), 91-97

Calinescu, Matei, *Rereading* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993)

Campbell, Matthew, Jacqueline M. Labbe, and Sally Shuttleworth, eds., *Memory and Memorials: From the French Revolution to World War One*, Memory and Narrative (2000; repr. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2004)

Caputo, John D., *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997)

Carey, Maurice, 'Places and People', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered*, pp. 18-20

Carroll, Joseph T., *Ireland in the War Years* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1975)

Carroll, Lewis, *'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There'*, ed. by Roger Lancelyn Green, Oxford World's Classics (1865; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Caruth, Cathy, 'Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History', *Yale French Studies*', 79 (1991), 181-92

---, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, MD:

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996)

---, 'Parting Words: Trauma, Silence, and Survival', in Jacobs and Sussman, *Acts of Narrative*, pp. 47-61

---, Introduction to Caruth, *Trauma*, pp. 3-12

---, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995)

Caserio, Robert L., '*The Heat of the Day*: Modernism and Narrative in Paul De Man and Elizabeth Bowen', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 54.2 (1993), 263-84

---, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Castricano, Jodey, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001)

Cavaliero, Glen, *The Supernatural and English Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

Cavarero, Adriana, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, trans. by Paul A. Kottman (London: Routledge, 1997)

Chamberlain, Mary, and Paul Thompson, eds., *Narrative and Genre* (London: Routledge, 1998)

Chambers, Ross, *Untimely Interventions: Aids Writing, Testimonial, and the Rhetoric of Haunting* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004)

Chessman, Harriet S., 'Women and Language in the Fiction of Elizabeth Bowen', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 29 (1983), 69-85

Chodorow, Nancy, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the*

Sociology of Gender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978)

Christensen, Lis, 'A Reading of Elizabeth Bowen's "A Day in the Dark"', *Irish University Review*, 27.2 (1997), 299-309

---, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Later Fiction* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2001)

Church, Margaret, 'Social Consciousness in the Works of Elizabeth Bowen, Iris Murdoch and Mary Lavin', *College Literature*, 7.2 (1980), 158-63

Cixous, Hélène, 'Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (The "Uncanny")', trans. by Robert Dennomé, *New Literary History*, 7.3 (1976), 525-48, 619-45

---, 'Introduction to Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* and *The Hunting of the Snark*', trans. by Marie Maclean, *New Literary History*, 13.2 (1982), 231-51

---, 'Without End, No, State of Drawingness, No, Rather: The Executioner's Taking Off' (1991), trans. by Catherine A.F. MacGillivray, in *Stigmata*, pp. 25-40

---, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. by Sarah Cornell, and Susan Sellers, The Wellek Library Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)

---, 'What is it O'Clock? Or the Door (We Never Enter)' (1994), trans. by Catherine A.F. MacGillivray, in *Stigmata*, pp. 72-109

---, 'Preface: On Stigmatexts', trans. by Eric Prenowitz, in *Stigmata*, pp. xi-xvi

---, *Stigmata: Escaping Texts* (1998; repr. London: Routledge, 2005)

---, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint*, trans. by Beverley Bie

Brahic, European Perspectives (2001; repr. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004

Cixous, Hélène, and Jacques Derrida, *Veils*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. by Mieke Bal, and Hent de Vries (1998; repr. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001)

Clej, Alina, *A Genealogy of the Modern Self: Thomas de Quincey and the Intoxication of Writing* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995)

Clewell, Tammy, 'Consolation Refused: Virginia Woolf, the Great War, and Modernist Mourning', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 50.1 (2004), 197-223

---, 'Mourning Beyond Melancholia: Freud's Psychoanalysis of Loss', *Japa*, 52.1 (2004), 43-67

Coates, John, 'Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*: The Loss of the Past and the Modern Consciousness', *Durham University Journal*, 51 (1990), 205-16

---, 'Emotional Need and Cultural Codes in *The House in Paris*', *Renascence*, 47.1 (1994), 11-29

---, 'The Misfortunes of Eva Trout', *Essays in Criticism*, 48.1 (1998) 59-79

---, *Social Discontinuity in the Novels of Elizabeth Bowen: The Conservative Quest*, Studies in British Literature 38 (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1998)

---, 'The Moral Argument of Elizabeth Bowen's Ghost Stories', *Renascence*, 52.4 (2000), 292-311

Coelsch-Foisner, Sabine, 'Finding a Voice: Women Writing the Short Story (to 1945)', in Malcolm and Malcolm, *A Companion to the British and Irish Short Story*, pp. 96-113

Cohen, Milton A., 'Fatal Symbiosis: Modernism and the First World War', in Quinn and Trout, *The Literature of the Great War Reconsidered*, pp. 159-71

Cohn, Dorrit, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978)

Cole, Robert, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War*, International Communications (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006)

Coles, Robert, *Irony in the Mind's Life: Essays on Novels by James Agee, Elizabeth Bowen, and George Eliot* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974)

Concilio, Carmen, 'Things That Do Speak in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', in *Moments of Moment: Aspects of the Literary Epiphany*, ed. by Wim Tigges, Studies in Literature 25 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 279-92

Connerton, Paul, *How Societies Remember*, Themes in the Social Sciences, ed. by John Dunn, Jack Goody, Eugene A. Hammel, and Geoffrey Hawthorn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Connolly, Claire, '(Be)longing: The Strange Place of Elizabeth Bowen's *Eva Trout*', in *Borderlands: Negotiating Boundaries in Post-Colonial Writing*, ed. by Monika Reif-Hülser, ASNEL Papers 4 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 135-43

---, ed., *Theorizing Ireland*, Readers in Cultural Criticism, ed. by Catherine Belsey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Cooke, Maeve, 'The Ethics of Post-Holocaust Art: Reflections on Redemption and Representation', *German Life and Letters*, 59.2 (2006), 266-79

Corbin, Laurie, *The Mother Mirror: Self-Representation and the Mother-Daughter Relation in Colette, Simone De Beauvoir, and Marguerite Duras*, Currents in Comparative Romance Languages and Literatures 32, ed. by Tamara Alvarez-Detrell, and Michael G. Paulson (New York: Peter Lang, 1996)

Corcoran, Neil, *After Yeats and Joyce: Reading Modern Irish Literature*, Opus, ed. by Christopher Butler, Robert Evans, and John Skorupski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

---, 'Discovery of a Lack: History and Ellipsis in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', *Irish University Review*, 31.2 (2001), 315-33

---, 'A Ghost of Style: The Aftermath of Anglo-Ireland in Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', *English*, 52 (2003), 125-37

---, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Enforced Return* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

---, Foreword to Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. xi-xv

Corse, Edward, 'British Propaganda in Neutral Eire after the Fall of France, 1940', *Contemporary British History*, 22.2 (2008), 163-80

Coughlan, Patricia, 'Women and Desire in the Work of Elizabeth Bowen', in Walshe, *Sex, Nation and Dissent in Irish Writing*, pp. 103-34

---, '"Not Like a Person at All": Bowen, the 1920s and "The Dancing-Mistress"', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 40-64

Craig, Patricia, *Elizabeth Bowen*, Lives of Modern Women, ed. by Emma Tennant

(Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986)

Cronin, Gearoid, 'The Big House and the Irish Landscape in the Work of Elizabeth Bowen', in Genet, *The Big House in Ireland*, pp. 143-61

Cronin, John, *The Anglo-Irish Novel*, vol. I (Belfast: Appletree, 1980)

Crowell, Ellen, 'Ghosting the Llangollen Ladies: Female Intimacies, Ascendancy Exiles, and the Anglo-Irish Novel', *Eire-Ireland*, 39.3-4 (2004), 202-27

Culler, Jonathan, *The Literary in Theory*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. by Mieke Bal, and Hent de Vries (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007)

Cullingford, Elizabeth, '"Something Else": Gendering Onliness in Elizabeth Bowen's Early Fiction', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 53.2 (2007), 276-305

Currie, Mark, *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007)

Daiches, David, 'The Novels of Elizabeth Bowen', *English Journal*, 38.6 (1949), 305-13

Dalsimer, Katherine, *Female Adolescence: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986)

Damrosch, Leo, *Fictions of Reality in the Age of Hume and Johnson* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989)

Davies, Alistair, and Alan Sinfield, eds., *British Culture of the Postwar: An Introduction to Literature and Society 1945-1999* (London: Routledge, 2000)

Davis, Colin, *After Poststructuralism: Reading, Stories and Theory* (London: Routledge, 2004)

---, '*États Présents*: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms', *French Studies*, 59.3

(2005), 373-79

---, *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Davis, Philip, *Memory and Writing: From Wordsworth to Lawrence*, Liverpool English Texts and Studies, ed. by Philip Edwards (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1983)

Dawson, Graham, *Making Peace with the Past?: Memory, Trauma and the Irish Troubles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007)

Deane, Seamus, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

---, 'Dumbness and Eloquence: A Note on English as We Write It in Ireland', *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory*, ed. by Clare Carroll, and Patricia King (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp 109-21

---, ed., *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vol. II, 3 vols. (Derry: Field Day, 1991)

DeCoste, Damon Marcel, 'The Literary Response to the Second World War', in Shaffer, *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel*, pp. 3-20

Deer, Patrick, *Culture in Camouflage: War, Empire, and Modern British Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Delaney, Paul, '"Acts of Remembrance": History, Anxiety and Elizabeth Bowen', *Etudes Irlandaises*, 31.1 (2006), 87-103

Derrida, Jacques, *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (1967; repr. London: Routledge, 2001)

---, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, corr. ed. (1967; repr.

Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997)

---, '...That Dangerous Supplement...' (1967), trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, pp. 76-109

---, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', trans. by Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies*, 48 (1972), 74-117

---, '*Fors*: The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok', trans. by Barbara Johnson, foreword to Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*, pp. xi-xlviii

---, '*From* Shibboleth: For Paul Celan' (1984), trans. by Joshua Wilner, in Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, pp. 370-413

---, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

---, 'Telepathy', trans. by Nicholas Royle, *Oxford Literary Review*, 10.1-2 (1988), 3-41

---, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, trans. by Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava and Peggy Kamuf, The Wellek Library Lectures, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989)

---, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991)

---, *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992)

---, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994)

---, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. by George Collins (1994; repr. London: Verso, 2005)

---, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz, Religion and Postmodernism, ed. by Mark C. Taylor (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

---, *The Gift of Death*, trans. by David Wills (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

---, Foreword to Cixous, *Stigmata*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz, pp. ix-x

---, '"Le Parjure", *Perhaps*: Storytelling and Lying ("Abrupt Breaches of Syntax")', in Jacobs and Sussman, *Acts of Narrative*, pp. 195-234

---, *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. by Mieke Bal, and Hent de Vries (2002; repr. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005)

---, 'At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am', trans. by Ruben Berezdivin, and Peggy Kamuf, in *Psyche*, vol. I, pp. 143-90

---, '*Ex Abrupto*', trans. by Peggy Kamuf, in Derrida, *Psyche*, vol. I, pp. 262-63

---, 'My Chances/*Mes Chances*: A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies', trans. by Irene Harvey, and Avital Ronell, in Derrida, *Psyche*, vol. I, pp 344-76

---, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, ed. by Peggy Kamuf, and Elizabeth Rottenberg, Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics, ed. by Werner Hamacher, vol. I, 2 vols. (1987; repr. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007)

---, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, ed. by Peggy Kamuf, and Elizabeth Rottenberg, Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics, ed. by Werner Hamacher, vol. II, 2 vols. (1987; repr. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008)

Derrida, Jacques, and Maurizio Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, ed. by Giacomo

Donis, and David Webb, trans. by Giacomo Donis (1997; repr. Cambridge: Polity, 2001)

DiBasio, Becky, 'The British and Irish Ghost Story and Tale of the Supernatural: 1880-1945', in Malcolm and Malcolm, *A Companion to the British and Irish Short Story*, pp. 81-95

DiBattista, Maria, 'Elizabeth Bowen and the Maternal Sublime', in *Troubled Legacies: Narrative and Inheritance*, ed. by Allan Hepburn (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 219-38

---, 'Elizabeth Bowen's Troubled Modernism', in Begam and Moses, *Modernism and Colonialism*, pp. 226-45

Dillon, Sarah, 'Elizabeth Bowen: "The Demon Lover" and "Mysterious Kor"', in Malcolm and Malcolm, *A Companion to the British and Irish Short Story*, pp. 236-43

Doody, Noreen, 'Elizabeth Bowen: A Short Biography', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 1-11

Dorenkamp, Angela G., '"Fall or Leap": Bowen's *The Heat of the Day*', *Critique*, 10.3 (1968), 13-21

Douglass, Ana, and Thomas A. Vogler, eds., *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma* (New York: Routledge, 2003)

Dowson, Jane, ed., *Women's Writing, 1945-60: After the Deluge* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Dowson, Jane, and Steven Earnshaw, eds., *Postmodern Subjects/Postmodern Texts* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995)

Draaisma, Douwe, *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas About the Mind*,

trans. by Paul Vincent (1995; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Duggan, John P., *Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985)

Dukes, Thomas, 'Desire Satisfied: War and Love in *The Heat of the Day* and *Moon Tiger*', *War, Literature, and the Arts*, 3.1 (1991), 75-97

Dunleavy, Janet Egleson, 'The Subtle Satire of Elizabeth Bowen and Mary Lavin', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 2.1 (1983), 69-82

Eagleton, Terry, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Literature* (London: Verso, 1995)

---, 'Changing the Question', in Connolly, *Theorizing Ireland*, pp. 76-90

---, *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003)

Eberwein, Robert T., *Film and the Dream Screen: A Sleep and a Forgetting* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984)

Edkins, Jenny, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Ellmann, Maud, 'Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadowy Fifth', in Mengham and Reeve, *The Fiction of the 1940s: Stories of Survival*, pp. 1-25

---, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow Across the Page* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003)

---, 'Bad Timing', introduction to Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, pp. vii-xxvii

---, ed., *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, Longman Critical Readers (London: Longman, 1994)

Eng, David L., and David Kazanjian, eds., *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

English, James F., ed., *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006)

Esty, Jed, 'Virgins of Empire: *The Last September* and the Antidevelopmental Plot', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 52.3 (2007), 257-75

Ettinger, Bracha Lichtenberg, 'Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere', *parallax*, 7.4 (2001), 89-114

---, 'Weaving a Woman Artist with-in the Matrixial Encounter-Event', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21.1 (2004), 69-93

---, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. by Brian Massumi, Theory out of Bounds 20, ed. by Sandra Buckley, Michael Hardt, and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006)

Feigel, Lara, '"The Savage and Austere Light of a Burning World": Death, Time, Film and Photography in Bowen's Wartime Fiction', presented at *'A mixture of showing off and suspicion, nearly as bad as sex': Reading Elizabeth Bowen*, University of Sussex, 30 May 2009

Felluga, Dino, 'Modules on Kristeva: On the Abject', in *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*, 28 November 2003 <http://www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/psychoanalysis/kristevaabject.html> [accessed 8 April 2009]

Felman, Shoshana, 'To Open the Question', *Yale French Studies*, 55/56 (1977), 5-10

---, 'Turning the Screw of Interpretation', *Yale French Studies*, 55/56 (1977), 94-207

Felman, Shoshana, and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992)

Fisk, Robert, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983)

Flax, Jane, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)

Fletcher, John, and Andrew Benjamin, eds., *Abjection, Melancholia, and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva* (London: Routledge, 1990)

Fogarty, Anne, '"The Horror of the Unlived Life": Mother-Daughter Relationships in Contemporary Irish Women's Fiction', in Giorgio, *Writing Mothers and Daughters*, pp. 85-118

---, 'Ireland and English Fiction', in Caserio, *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*, pp. 102-13

Fogu, Claudio, and Wulf Kansteiner, 'The Politics of Memory and the Poetics of History', in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 284-310

Foster, R. F., *Modern Ireland: 1600-1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988)

---, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin, 1993)

---, 'Irish and Regional: Locale in Elizabeth Bowen's Writing', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered*, pp. 21-27

---, *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up in Ireland* (London: Penguin, 2001)

Foucault, Michel, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard, and Sherry Simon, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977)

Franks, Jill, 'Sex, Guns, and Death: Deborah Warner's Adaptation of *The Last September*', *New Hibernia Review*, 10.3 (2006), 122-36

Fraustino, Daniel V., 'Elizabeth Bowen's "The Demon Lover": Psychosis or Seduction?', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 17.4 (1980), 483-87

Freedman, Ariela, *Death, Men, and Modernism: Trauma and Narrative in British Fiction from Hardy to Woolf* (New York: Routledge, 2003)

Freud, Sigmund, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. by Joyce Crick, Oxford World's Classics (1899; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

---, 'On Dreams' (1901), in Freud, *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 81-125

---, 'Family Romances' (1909), in Freud, *The Uncanny*, pp. 35-41

---, 'Repression' (1915), in Freud, *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 523-33

---, 'Timely Reflections on War and Death' (1915), in Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, pp. 169-94

---, 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), in Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, pp. 203-18

---, 'The Uncanny' (1919), in Freud, *The Uncanny*, pp. 121-62

---, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), in Freud, *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 218-68

---, *General Psychological Theory* (1925; repr. New York: Touchstone, 1997)

---, 'Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety' (1926), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and Anna Freud, vol. XX, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1953-73)

---, 'Moses and Monotheism, An Outline of Psychoanalysis and Other Works', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and Anna Freud, vol. XXIII, 24 vols. (1937-1939; repr. London: Vintage, 2001)

---, *The Uncanny*, trans. by David McLintock, The Penguin Freud, ed. by Adam Phillips (London: Penguin, 2003)

---, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, trans. by Shaun Whiteside, The New Penguin Freud, ed. by Adam Phillips (London: Penguin, 2005)

---, *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. by Anna Freud, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage, 2005)

Friedlander, Saul, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)

Gallop, Jane, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction*, Language, Discourse, Society, ed. by Stephen Heath, and Colin MacCabe (London: Macmillan, 1982)

Gana, Nouri, 'Revolutionaries Without a Revolution: The Case of Julia Kristeva', *College Literature*, 31.4 (2004), 188-202

Garber, Majorie B., *Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974)

Gavin, Adrienne, 'Living in a World of Make-Believe: Fantasy, Female Identity, and Modern Short Stories by Women in the British Tradition', in

Postmodern Approaches to the Short Story, ed. by Farhat Iftekharrudin, Joseph Boyden, Joseph Longo, and Mary Rohrberger, Contributions to the Study of World Literature 118 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2003), pp. 121-32

Genet, Jacqueline, ed., *The Big House in Ireland: Reality and Representation* (Kerry: Brandon, 1991)

Ghost Dance, dir. Ken McMullen, Other Cinema, 1983

Gill, Richard, 'The Country House in a Time of Troubles', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 51-61

Gilmore, Leigh, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001)

Giobbi, Giuliana, 'A Blurred Picture: Adolescent Girls Growing Up in Fanny Burney, George Eliot, Rosamond Lehmann, Elizabeth Bowen and Dacia Maraini', *Journal of European Studies*, 25.2 (1995), 141-64

Giorgio, Adalgisa, 'Writing the Mother-Daughter Relationship: Psychoanalysis, Culture, and Literary Criticism', in Giorgio, *Writing Mothers and Daughters*, pp. 11-45

---, ed., *Writing Mothers and Daughters: Renegotiating the Mother in Western European Narratives by Women* (New York: Berghahn, 2002)

Glendinning, Victoria, *Elizabeth Bowen: Portrait of a Writer*, Penguin Literary Biographies (1977; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985)

---, 'Gardens and Gardening in the Writings of Elizabeth Bowen', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered*, pp. 28-34

Glendinning, Victoria, with Judith Robertson, eds., *Love's Civil War: Elizabeth*

Bowen and Charles Ritchie, Letters and Diaries, 1941-1973 (London: Simon & Schuster, 2008)

Glover, David, and Cora Kaplan, *Genders*, The New Critical Idiom, ed. by John Drakakis (London: Routledge, 2000)

Gonzalez, Alexander G., 'Elizabeth Bowen's "Her Table Spread": A Joycean Irish Story', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 30.3 (1993), 343-48

Graham, Colin, *Deconstructing Ireland: Identity, Theory, Culture*, Tendencies: Identities, Texts, Cultures, ed. by Peter Brooker (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001)

Gray, Peter, and Kendrick Oliver, Introduction to Gray and Oliver, *The Memory of Catastrophe*, pp. 1-18

---, eds., *The Memory of Catastrophe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004)

Greaves, Richard, 'Responses to War: 1914-18 and 1939-45', in Malcolm and Malcolm, *A Companion to the British and Irish Short Story*, pp. 35-50

Greene, Gayle, 'Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory', *Signs*, 16.2 (1991), 290-321

Greene, George, 'Elizabeth Bowen: The Sleuth Who Bugged Tea Cups', *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 67.4 (1991), 604-18

Grosz, Elizabeth, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*, Women's Studies (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989)

---, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1990)

Grubgeld, Elizabeth, 'Cultural Autobiography and the Female Subject: The Genre of the Patrilineal History and the Lifewriting of Elizabeth Bowen', *Genre:*

Forms of Discourse and Culture, 27.3 (1994), 209-26

Gunn, Daniel, *Psychoanalysis and Fiction: An Exploration of Literary and Psychoanalytic Borders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Hadfield, J.A., *Dreams and Nightmares* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954)

Hand, Derek, 'Ghosts from Our Future: Bowen and the Unfinished Business of Living', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 65-76

Hanson, Clare, 'The Free Story', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 139-51

---, *Hysterical Fictions: The 'Woman's Novel' in the Twentieth Century* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000)

---, 'Little Girls and Large Women: Representations of the Female Body in Elizabeth Bowen's Later Fiction', in *Body Matters: Feminism, Textuality, Corporeality*, ed. by Avril Horner, and Angela Keane (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 185-98

---, *A Cultural History of Pregnancy: Pregnancy, Medicine and Culture, 1750-2000* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Hapgood, Lynne, and Nancy L. Paxton, eds., *Outside Modernism: In Pursuit of the English Novel, 1900-30* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000)

Harkness, Bruce, 'The Fiction of Elizabeth Bowen', *English Journal*, 44.9 (1955), 499-506

Hartman, Geoffrey, *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, The Helen and Martin Schwartz Lectures in Jewish Studies, 1994 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996)

---, *Scars of the Spirit: The Struggle Against Inauthenticity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)

Haughton, Hugh, Introduction to Bowen, *To the North*, pp. vii-xix

---, Introduction to Freud, *The Uncanny*, pp. vii-lx

Head, Dominic, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction, 1950-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Heath, William, *Elizabeth Bowen: An Introduction to Her Novels* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961)

---, 'The Jacobean Melodrama of *To the North*', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 27-38

Henke, Suzette A., *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* (London: Macmillan, 2000)

Hepburn, Allan, *Intrigue: Espionage and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

Herman, Nini, *Too Long a Child: The Mother-Daughter Dyad* (London: Free Association, 1989)

Herr, Cheryl, 'The Erotics of Irishness', *Critical Quarterly*, 17.1 (1990), 1-34

Hirsch, Marianne, *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989)

---, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997

---, 'The Generation of Postmemory', *Poetics Today*, 29.1 (2008), 103-28

Holland, Nancy J., 'The Death of the Other/Father: A Feminist Reading of Derrida's Hauntology', *Hypatia*, 16.1 (2001), 64-71

Hoogland, Renée C., *Elizabeth Bowen: A Reputation in Writing*, The Cutting Edge: Lesbian Life and Literature, ed. by Karla Jay (New York: New York

University Press, 1994)

---, 'Elizabeth Bowen: Unconscious Undertows: Queer Perspectives on *Friends and Relations*', in Quinn, *Recharting the Thirties*, pp. 82-101

Hooper, Brad, 'Elizabeth Bowen's "The Happy Autumn Fields": A Dream or Not?', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 21.2 (1984), 151-53

Hopkins, Chris, 'Elizabeth Bowen: Realism, Modernism and Gendered Identity in Her Novels of the 1930s', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 4 (1995), 271-79

---, 'Elizabeth Bowen', *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 21.2 (2001), 114-49

---, *English Fiction in the 1930s: Language, Genre, History*, Continuum Literary Studies (London: Continuum, 2006)

Horvitz, Deborah M., *Literary Trauma: Sadism, Memory, and Sexual Violence in American Women's Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000)

Howlett, Jana, and Rod Mengham, eds., *The Violent Muse: Violence and the Artistic Imagination in Europe, 1910-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994)

Humble, Nicola, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s-1950s: Class, Domesticity, and Bohemianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Huyssen, Andreas, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, Cultural Memory in the Present, ed. by Mieke Bal, and Hent de Vries (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003)

Ingelbien, Raphael, 'A Girl in the Forties: Larkin and the Politics of World War Two', *Critical Survey*, 13.1 (2001), 80-93

---, 'Gothic Genealogies: *Dracula*, *Bowen's Court*, and Anglo-Irish Psychology',

ELH, 70.4 (2003), 1089-105

Inglesby, Elizabeth C., '"Expressive Objects": Elizabeth Bowen's Narrative Materializes', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 53.2 (2007), 306-33

Ingman, Heather, *Women's Fiction Between the Wars: Mothers, Daughters and Writing* (New York: St Martin's, 1998)

---, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women: Nation and Gender* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

Ingram, Forrest L., *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century*, De Proprietatibus Litterarum, ed. by C.H. van Schooneveld (The Hague: Mouton, 1971)

Innes, C.L., 'Custom, Ceremony and Innocence: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', in *Troubled Histories, Troubled Fictions: Twentieth-Century Anglo-Irish Prose*, ed. by Theo D'haen, and José Lanters, Costerus New Series 101 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 105-18

Irigaray, Luce, *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. by Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991)

---, *Key Writings* (London: Continuum, 2004)

Irwin-Zarecka, Iwona, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1994)

Jacobs, Carol, and Henry Sussman, eds., *Acts of Narrative* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003)

Jacobus, Mary, *First Things: The Maternal Imaginary in Literature, Art, and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1995)

---, *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

1999)

James, David, 'The New Purism', *Textual Practice*, 21.4 (2007), 687-714

Jeffares, A. Norman, *Anglo-Irish Literature*, Macmillan History of Literature, ed. by A. Norman Jeffares (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1982)

Joannou, Maroula, *Ladies, Please Don't Smash These Windows: Women's Writing, Feminist Consciousness, and Social Change, 1918-38* (Providence, RI: Berg, 1995)

---, ed., *Women Writers of the 1930s: Gender, Politics and History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)

Johnson, Barbara, Translator's Note to Derrida, '*Fors*', in Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*, pp. xi-xlviii

---, *Mother Tongues: Sexualty, Trials, Motherhood, Translation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003)

Johnson, Toni O'Brien, 'Light and Enlightenment in Elizabeth Bowen's Irish Novels', *ARIEL*, 18.2 (1987), 47-62

Jones, Ernest, *On the Nightmare*, The International Psycho-Analytical Library, ed. by Ernest Jones, 2nd ed. (1931; repr. New York: Liveright, 1951)

Jones, Hester, 'Triumphant Obstination: Reading Adrienne Rich and Elizabeth Bowen', in *Real Voices on Reading*, ed. by Philip Davis (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 103-21

Jordan, Heather Bryant, *How Will the Heart Endure: Elizabeth Bowen and the Landscape of War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992)

---, 'A Bequest of Her Own: The Reinvention of Elizabeth Bowen', *New Hibernia Review*, 12.2 (2008), 46-62

Jouve, Nicole Ward, *Female Genesis: Creativity, Self and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998)

Jung, C.G., *Dreams*, trans. by R.F.C. Hull (London: Ark, 1982)

Kaplan, E. Ann, *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005)

Kelly, Gary, 'Gender and Memory in Post-Revolutionary Women's Writing', in Campbell and others, *Memory and Memorials*, pp. 119-31

Kelly, Marian, 'The Power of the Past: Structural Nostalgia in Elizabeth Bowen's *The House in Paris* and *The Little Girls*', *Style*, 36.1 (2002), 1-18

Kemp, Sandra, '"But How Describe a World Seen Without a Self?": Feminism, Fiction and Modernism', *Critical Quarterly*, 32.1 (1990), 99-118

Kenney, Edwin J., *Elizabeth Bowen*, Bucknell University Press – The Irish Writers Series, ed. by James F. Carens (London: Associated University Press, 1975)

Kiberd, Declan, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996)

---, *The Irish Writer and the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Killeen, Jarlath, 'Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction', *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 1 (2006), <http://irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/jarlath.html>

King, Nicola, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self*, Tendencies: Identities, Texts, Cultures, ed. by Peter Brooker (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000)

Kitagawa, Yoriko, 'Anticipating the Postmodern Self: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Death of the Heart*', *English Studies*, 5 (2000), 484-96

Klein, Melanie, *Contributions to Psycho-Analysis: 1921-1945*, The International Psycho-Analytical Library, ed. by Ernest Jones (London: Hogarth, 1948)

---, *Envy and Gratitude: A Study of Unconscious Sources* (London: Tavistock, 1957)

Krapp, Peter, *Deja Vu: Aberrations of Cultural Memory*, Electronic Mediations 12, ed. by Katherine Hayles, Mark Poster, and Samuel Weber (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004)

Kreilkamp, Vera, 'Bowen: Ascendancy Modernist', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 12-26

Krell, David Farrell, *The Purest of Bastards: Works of Mourning, Art, and Affirmation in the Thought of Jacques Derrida*, American and European Philosophy, ed. by Charles E. Scott, and John J. Stuhr (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000)

Kremer, S. Lillian, *Women's Holocaust Writing: Memory and Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001)

Kristeva, Julia, 'Women's Time', trans. by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *Signs*, 7.1 (1981), 13-35

---, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)

---, 'Stabat Mater' (1983), trans. by Leon S. Roudiez, in *The Kristeva Reader*, pp. 160-86

---, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986)

---, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (1988; repr. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991)

---, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989)

Lacan, Jacques, *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (1966; repr. London: Routledge, 2001)

---, 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"', trans. by Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies*, 48 (1972), 39-72

Lacan, Jacques, Jacques-Alain Miller, and James Hulbert, 'Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet', *Yale French Studies*, 55/56 (1977), 11-52

LaCapra, Dominick, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998)

---, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Parallax (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001)

---, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004)

Laigle, Deirdre M., 'Images of the Big House in Elizabeth Bowen: *The Last September*', *Cahiers du Centre d'Etudes Irlandaises*, 9 (1984), 61-80

Laing, Kathryn, 'Virginia Woolf in Ireland: A Short Voyage Out', *South Carolina Review*, 34.1 (2001), 180-87

Lang, Berel, ed., *Writing and the Holocaust* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988)

Lassner, Phyllis, '"The Past Is a Burning Pattern: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', *Eire-Ireland*, 21.1 (1986), 40-54

---, 'Reimagining the Arts of War: Language and History in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* and Rose Macaulay's *The World My Wilderness*', *Perspectives on Contemporary Literature*, 14 (1988), 30-38

---, *Elizabeth Bowen*, Women Writers, ed. by Eva Figes, and Adele King (London: Macmillan, 1990)

---, *Elizabeth Bowen: A Study of the Short Fiction*, Twayne's Studies in Short Fiction 27, ed. by Gordon Weaver (New York: Twayne, 1991)

Lawson, Tom, '"The Free-Masonry of Sorrow"? English National Identities and the Memorialization of the Great War in Britain, 1919-1931', *History and Memory*, 20.1 (2008), 89-120

Leavey, Jr., John P., '*Destinerrance*: The Apotropocalyptics of Translation', in *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, ed. by John Sallis (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 33-43

Lee, Hermione, 'The Placing of Loss: Elizabeth Bowen's *To the North*', *Essays in Criticism*, 28 (1978), 129-42

---, *Elizabeth Bowen*, rev. ed. (London: Vintage, 1999)

---, *Body Parts: Essays in Life-Writing* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2005)

Leerssen, Joep, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, Critical Conditions: Field Day Essays and Monographs, ed. by Seamus Deane (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996)

---, 'Monument and Trauma: Varieties of Remembrance', in McBride, *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, pp. 204-22

Lennon, Mary, Marie McAdam, and Joanna O'Brien, *Across the Water: Irish*

Women's Lives in Britain (London: Virago, 1988)

Leray, Josette, 'Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', in Genet, *The Big House in Ireland*, pp. 163-78

Leys, Ruth, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

---, 'Image and Trauma', *Science in Context*, 19.1 (2006), 137-49

Lifton, Robert Jay, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1979)

Light, Alison, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Lippmann, Paul, 'The Canary in the Mind: On the Fate of Dreams in Psychoanalysis and in Contemporary Culture', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 66.2 (2006), 113-30

Liu, Alan, 'The New Historicism and the Work of Mourning', in *The Wordsworthian Enlightenment: Romantic Poetry and the Ecology of Reading*, ed. by Helen Regueiro Elam, and Frances Ferguson (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 149-57

Lomas, David, *The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000)

Lonergan, Patrick, 'Irish Short Fiction: 1880-1945', in Malcolm and Malcolm, *A Companion to the British and Irish Short Story*, pp. 51-64

Loraux, Nicole, *Mothers in Mourning, with the essay 'Of Amnesty and Its Opposite'*, trans. by Corinne Pache, Myth and Poetics, ed. by Gregory Nagy (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998)

Lounsberry, Barbara, Susan Lohafer, Mary Rohrberger, Stephen Pett, and R.C. Feddersen, eds., *The Tales We Tell: Perspectives on the Short Story* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1998)

Lubbers, Klaus, 'Continuity and Change in Irish Fiction: The Case of the Big-House Novel', in Rauchbauer, *Ancestral Voices*, pp. 17-29

Luckhurst, Roger, *The Trauma Question* (London: Routledge, 2008)

Lyons, F.S.L., *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979)

MacCannell, Juliet Flower, *Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious*, Critics of the Twentieth Century, ed. by Christopher Norris (London: Croom Helm, 1986)

MacCarthy, Robert, 'Bowen Religion', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered*, pp. 35-39

MacCurdy, Marian Mesrobian, *The Mind's Eye: Image and Memory in Writing About Trauma* (Amherst: University of Massachussetts Press, 2007)

MacDonald, Ronald R., ed., *The Burial Places of Memory: Epic Underworlds in Virgil, Dante, and Milton* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987)

MacKay, Marina, 'World War II, the Welfare State, and Postwar "Humanism"', in Caserio, *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*, pp. 146-62

---, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

MacKay, Marina, and Lyndsey Stonebridge, eds., *British Fiction after*

Modernism: The Novel at Mid-Century (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Magot, Céline, 'Elizabeth Bowen's London in *The Heat of the Day*: An Impression of the City in the Territory of War', *Literary London* 3.1 (2005), <http://www.literarylondon.org/londonjournal/march2005/Magot.html>

Malcolm, Cheryl Alexander, and David Malcolm, eds., *A Companion to the British and Irish Short Story* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008)

Mann, Chris, 'Family Fables', in Chamberlain and Thompson, *Narrative and Genre*, pp. 81-98

Mansergh, Martin, 'Elizabeth Bowen and the Anglo-Irish Tradition', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered*, pp. 40-50

Marković, Vida E., *The Changing Face: Disintegration of Personality in the Twentieth-Century British Novel, 1900-1950*, Crosscurrents/Modern Critiques, ed. by Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970)

Marrs, Suzanne, 'Place and the Displaced in Eudora Welty's *The Bride of the Innisfallen*', *Mississippi Quarterly*, 50.4 (1997), 647-68

Martin, Augustine, 'Literature and Society, 1938-51', in *Ireland in the War Years and After, 1939-51*, ed. by Kevin B. Nowlan, and T. Desmond Williams (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1969), pp. 167-84

Maslen, Elizabeth, *Political and Social Issues in British Women's Fiction, 1928-1968* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001)

---, 'Women Writers in World War II', *Literature Compass*, 3.3 (2006), 625-35

Masschelein, Anneleen, 'The Concept as Ghost: Conceptualization of the Uncanny in Late-Twentieth-Century Theory', *Mosaic*, 35.1 (2002), 53-68

Mattison, Alice, 'Jane Austen with Cigarettes', *Southwest Review*, 89.2-3 (2004), 282-92

Mayrer, Rachel, 'Gothic Memory and Forgetfulness in Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love* and "The Demon Lover"', *Irish Studies Review*, 16.1 (2008), 33-40

McBride, Ian, ed., *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

McConville, Michael, *Ascendancy to Oblivion: The Story of the Anglo-Irish* (London: Quartet, 1986)

McCormack, W.J., 'Irish Gothic and After (1820-1945)', in Deane, *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, pp. 831-949

---, *Dissolute Characters: Irish Literary History Through Balzac, Sheridan Le Fanu, Yeats and Bowen* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993)

McDowell, Alfred, '*The Death of the Heart* and the Human Dilemma', *Modern Language Studies*, 8.2 (1978), 5-16

McGowan, Martha, 'The Enclosed Garden in Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*', *Eire-Ireland*, 16 (1981), 55-70

McHugh, Roger, and Maurice Harmon, *Short History of Anglo-Irish Literature: From Its Origins to the Present Day* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 1982)

McMahon, Paul, *British Spies and Irish Rebels: British Intelligence and Ireland, 1916-1945* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008)

McNally, Richard J., *Remembering Trauma* (2003; repr. Cambridge, MA:

Harvard University Press, 2005)

Medoff, Jeslyn, '"There Is No Elsewhere": Elizabeth Bowen's Perceptions of War', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 30 (1984), 73-81

Mengham, Rod, 'British Fiction of the War', in MacKay, *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II*, pp. 26-42

Mengham, Rod, and N.H. Reeve, eds., *The Fiction of the 1940s: Stories of Survival* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001)

Mepham, John, 'Varieties of Modernism, Varieties of Incomprehension: Patrick Hamilton and Elizabeth Bowen', in MacKay and Stonebridge, *British Fiction after Modernism*, pp. 59-76

Micale, Mark S., and Paul Lerner, eds., *Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870-1930*, Cambridge Studies in the History of Medicine, ed. by Charles Rosenberg, and Colin Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Middleton, Peter, and Tim Woods, *Literatures of Memory: History, Time and Space in Postwar Writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)

Miller, Brook, 'The Impersonal Personal: Value, Voice, and Agency in Elizabeth Bowen's Literary and Social Criticism', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 53.2 (2007), 351-69

Miller, Brook, with Luke Elward, Tessa Hempel, and Philip Kollar, 'Narrative, Meaning and Agency in *The Heat of the Day*', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 132-48

Miller, Jane, 'Re-Reading Elizabeth Bowen', *Raritan*, 20.1 (2000), 17-32

Miller, J. Hillis, *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, De Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin*, The Wellek Library Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987)

---, *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992)

---, 'Derrida's Topographies', *South Atlantic Review*, 59.1 (1994), 1-25

---, *Reading Narrative* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998)

---, 'Lying Against Death: Out of the Loop', in Jacobs and Sussman, *Acts of Narrative*, pp. 15-30

---, 'Derrida's *Destinerrance*', *MLN*, 121 (2006), 893-910

---, 'Derrida's Remains', *Mosaic*, 39.3 (2006), 197-211

Miller, Kristine A., '"Even a Shelter's Not Safe": The Blitz on Homes in Elizabeth Bowen's Wartime Writing', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 45.2 (1999), 138-58

Miller, Nancy K., and Jason Daniel Tougaw, eds., *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony, and Community* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002)

Mitchell, Edward, 'Themes in Elizabeth Bowen's Short Stories', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 41-50

Mitchell, Juliet, ed., *The Selected Melanie Klein* (Harmondsowrth: Penguin, 1986)

Moi, Toril, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, New Accents (London: Methuen, 1985)

Montefiore, Janet, *Men and Women Writers of the 1930s: The Dangerous Flood of History* (London: Routledge, 1996)

Moody, T.W., Review of *Bowen's Court*, *English Historical Review*, 60.237 (1945), 264-65

Mooney, Sinead, 'Unstable Compounds: Bowen's Beckettian Affinities', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 52.3 (2007), 238-56

---, 'Bowen and the Modern Ghost', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 77-94

Morrow, Ann, *Picnic in a Foreign Land: The Eccentric Lives of the Anglo-Irish* (London: Grafton, 1989)

Motte, Warren, 'The Work of Mourning', *Yale French Studies*, 105 (2004), 56-71

Moynahan, Julian, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995)

Muldoon, Paul, *To Ireland, I*, The Clarendon Lectures in English Literature 1998 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Muller, John P., and William J. Richardson, eds., *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988)

Munton, Alan, *English Fiction of the Second World War* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989)

Murphy, Sara, 'Mourning and Metonymy: Bearing Witness Between Women and Generations', *Hypatia*, 19.4 (2004), 144-68

Naas, Michael, 'History's Remains: Of Memory, Mourning, and the Event', *Research in Phenomenology*, 33 (2003), 75-96

Naremore, James, *More Than Night: Film Noir in Its Contexts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)

Nicol, Bran, ed., *Postmodernism and the Contemporary Novel: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002)

Nicolas, Dominique, '*The Last September* by Elizabeth Bowen, or a Chronicle of

a Foreshadowed Death', in *Back to the Present, Forward to the Past: Irish Writing and History since 1798*, ed. by Patricia A. Lynch, Joachim Fischer, and Brian Coates, Costerus New Series 161 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 297-308

Nora, Pierre, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux De Mémoire*', *Representations*, 26 (1989), 7-24

O'Faolain, Sean, *The Short Story* (London: Collins, 1948)

Oliver, Kelly, ed., *Ethics, Politics, and Difference in Julia Kristeva's Writing* (New York: Routledge, 1993)

Oppenheim, Janet, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

Osborn, Susan, 'Reconsidering Elizabeth Bowen', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 52.1 (2006), 187-98

---, 'Elizabeth Bowen: New Directions for Critical Thinking', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 53.2 (2007), 225-37

---, '"How to Measure This Unaccountable Darkness Between the Trees": The Strange Relation of Style and Meaning in *The Last September*', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 34-60

---, ed., *Elizabeth Bowen: New Critical Perspectives* (Togher: Cork UP, 2009)

O'Toole, Bridget, 'Three Writers of the Big House: Elizabeth Bowen, Molly Keane and Jennifer Johnston', in *Across a Roaring Hill: The Protestant Imagination in Modern Ireland*, ed. by Gerald Dawe, and Edna Longley (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1985), pp. 124-38

O'Toole, Tina, 'Angels and Monsters: Embodiment and Desire in *Eva Trout*', in

Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 162-78

Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), *OED Online* <http://dictionary.oed.com>

Parkins, Wendy, 'Moving Dangerously: Mobility and the Modern Woman', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 20.1 (2001), 77-92

Parsons, Deborah L., 'Souls Astray: Elizabeth Bowen's Landscape of War', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 8.1 (1997), 24-32

---, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Peach, Linden, *The Contemporary Irish Novel: Critical Readings* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Peare, Oliver, with Molly Keane, 'A Kinsale Perspective', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered*, pp. 51-53

Perce, Ann W., *Those Uneasy Currents: Elements of Menace and Terror in Selected Fiction of Elizabeth Bowen* (Boca Raton, FA: Universal, 2006)

Phillips, Lawrence, *London Narratives: Post-War Fiction and the City*, Continuum Literary Studies (London: Continuum, 2006)

Piette, Adam, *Imagination at War: British Fiction and Poetry, 1939-45* (London: Papermac, 1995)

Plain, Gill, 'From War-Time to Women's Time: Coping with Conflict in Women's Fiction of the 1940s', *Time & Society*, 3 (1994), 341-64

---, *Women's Fiction of the Second World War: Gender, Power and Resistance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996)

---, 'Women Writers and the War', in MacKay, *The Cambridge Companion to the*

Literature of World War II, pp. 165-78

Poe, Edgar Allan, *Selected Tales*, ed. by David van Leer, Oxford World's Classics (1833-49; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Pollock, Griselda, 'Thinking the Feminine: Aesthetic Practice as Introduction to Bracha Ettinger and the Concepts of Matrix and Metramorphosis', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21.1 (2004), 5-65

Pong, Beryl, 'Space and Time in the Bombed City: Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear* and Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day*', *Literary London*, 7.1 (2009) < http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/pong.html>

Priestman, Martin, *Crime Fiction from Poe to the Present*, Writers and Their Work, ed. by Isobel Armstrong (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998)

Proctor, Tammy M., *Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003)

Punter, David, ed., *A Companion to the Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)

Pyle, Hilary, 'A Portrait of Elizabeth Bowen by Patrick Hennessy', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered*, pp. 54-59

Quinn, Patrick J., ed., *Recharting the Thirties* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1996)

Quinn, Patrick J., and Steven Trout, eds., *The Literature of the Great War Reconsidered: Beyond Modern Memory* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001)

Radford, Jean, 'Late Modernism and the Politics of History', in Joannou, *Women Writers of the 1930s*, pp. 33-45

---, 'Face to Face with the Other: Levinas and Elizabeth Bowen's *The House in*

Paris', in *Modernity, Modernism, Postmodernism*, ed. by Manuel Barbeito (Santiago de Compostela: Universidade, Servicio de Publicacións e Intercambio Cientiífico, 2000), pp. 93-106

Raitt, Suzanne, and Trudi Tate, eds., *Women's Fiction and the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Ramazani, Jahan, *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994)

Rand, Nicholas T., and Maria Torok, 'The Secret of Psychoanalysis: History Reads Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 13.2 (1987), 278-86

Randall, Phyllis R., 'Pinter and Bowen: *The Heat of the Day*', in *Pinter at Sixty*, ed. by Katherine H. Burkman, and John L. Kundert-Gibbs, Drama and Performance Studies, ed. by Timothy Wiles (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 173-82

Rashkin, Esther, *Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992)

Rau, Petra, 'The Common Frontier: Fictions of Alterity in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* and Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*', *Literature and History*, 14.1 (2005), 31-55

Rauchbauer, Otto, ed., *Ancestral Voices: The Big House in Anglo-Irish Literature* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1992)

Rawlinson, Mark, *British Writing of the Second World War*, Oxford English Monographs, ed. by Christopher Butler, Vincent Gillespie, Douglas Gray, Emrys Jones, Roger Lonsdale, Fiona Stafford (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000)

Raymond, Claire, *The Posthumous Voice in Women's Writing from Mary Shelley*

to Sylvia Plath (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006)

Reynolds, Lorna, '*The Last September* – Elizabeth Bowen's Paradise Lost', in Rauchbauer, *Ancestral Voices*, pp. 149-58

Rich, Adrienne, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (London: Virago, 1977)

Rickels, Laurence A., *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1988)

Ricoeur, Paul, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. by Robert Czerny, Kathleen McLaughlin, and John Costello (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978)

---, *Time and Narrative*, trans. by Kathleen McLaughlin, and David Pellauer, vol. I, 2 vols. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984)

---, *Time and Narrative*, trans. by Kathleen McLaughlin, and David Pellauer, vol. II, 2 vols. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1985)

---, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey, and David Pellauer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004)

Robbins, Michael, 'Another Look at Dreaming: Disentangling Freud's Primary and Secondary Process Theories', *Japa*, 52.2 (2004), 355-84

Robson, Kathryn, *Writing Wounds: The Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women's Life-Writing*, Genus: Gender in Modern Culture, ed. by Russell West, Jennifer Yee, Frank Lay, and Sabine Schulting (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004)

Rose, Catherine, *The Female Experience: The Story of the Woman Movement in Ireland* (Galway: Arlen House, 1975)

Rose, Jacqueline, *Why War? – Psychoanalysis, Politics, and the Return to Melanie Klein*, The Bucknell Lectures in Literary Theory, ed. by Michael Payne, and Harold Schweizer (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993)

---, 'Bizarre Objects: Mary Butts and Elizabeth Bowen', *Critical Quarterly*, 42.1 (2000), 75-85.

---, *On Not Being Able to Sleep: Psychoanalysis and the Modern World* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003)

Rothberg, Michael, *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)

Royle, Nicholas, *Telepathy and Literature: Essays on the Reading Mind* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991)

---, *After Derrida* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)

---, *Jacques Derrida*, Routledge Critical Thinkers, ed. by Robert Eaglestone (London: Routledge, 2003)

---, 'The "Telepathy Effect": Notes Toward a Reconsideration of Narrative Fiction', in Jacobs and Sussman, *Acts of Narrative*, pp. 93-109

---, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)

---, 'Portmanteau', *New Literary History*, 37.1 (2006), 237-47

Ruddick, Sara, 'Maternal Thinking', *Feminist Studies*, 6.2 (1980), 342-67

Rumbarger, Lee, 'Housekeeping: Women Modernists' Writing on War and Home', *Women's Studies*, 35.1 (2006), 1-15

Sacks, Peter, *The English Elegy: Studies in Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985)

Sage, Victor, 'Irish Gothic: C.R. Maturin and J.S. Le Fanu', in Punter, *A*

Companion to the Gothic, pp. 81-93

Santner, Eric L., *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990)

Sayers, Janet, *Sexual Contradictions: Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Feminism* (London: Tavistock, 1986)

Scanlan, Margaret, 'Rumours of War: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* and J.G. Farrell's *Troubles*', *Eire-Ireland*, 20.2 (1985), 70-89

---, 'The Recuperation of History in British and Irish Fiction', in Shaffer, *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel*, pp. 144-59

Sceats, Sarah, 'Souls Astray: Belonging and the Idea of Home: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day*, Betty Miller's *On the Side of the Angels*, and *Death of the Nightingale*, and Muriel Spark's *Memento Mori*', in Dowson, *Women's Writing*, pp. 85-97

Sceats, Sarah, and Gail Cunningham, eds., *Image and Power: Women in Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1996)

Schafer, Roy, 'Narration in the Psychoanalytic Dialogue', *Critical Quarterly*, 7.1 (1980), 29-53

Schama, Simon, *Landscape and Memory* (1995; repr. London: Harper Perennial, 2004)

Schneidau, Herbert N., *Waking Giants: The Presence of the Past in Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Schneider, Karen, *Loving Arms: British Women Writing the Second World War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997)

Schor, Esther, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the*

Enlightenment to Victoria, Literature in History, ed. by David Bromwich, James Chandler, and Lionel Gossman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994)

Schwab, Gabriele, 'Writing Against Memory and Forgetting', *Literature and Medicine*, 25.1 (2006), 95-121

Schwartz, Louis-Georges, 'Cinema and the ~~Meaning~~ of "Life"', *Discourse*, 28.2/3 (2008), 7-27

Sellery, J. Nan, and William O. Harris, *Elizabeth Bowen: A Bibliography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981)

Seward, Barbara, 'Elizabeth Bowen's World of Impoverished Love', *College English*, 18.1 (1956), 30-37

Shaffer, Brian W., ed., *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel, 1945-2000* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005)

Shaw, Valerie, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (London: Longman, 1983)

Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*, rev. ed. (London: Virago, 1982)

Shumaker, Jeanette, 'Bruised Boys and "Fallen" Women: The Need for Rescue in Short Stories by Elizabeth Bowen', *South Carolina Review*, 32.1 (1999), 88-98

Sinfield, Alan, *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2004)

Sokolsky, Anita, 'The Melancholy Persuasion', in Ellmann, *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, pp. 128-42

Spooner, Catherine, and Emma McEvoy, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Gothic* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007)

Stevens, Julie Anne, 'Bowen: The Critical Response', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 179-92

Stewart, Pamela J., and Andrew Strathern, eds., *Landscape, Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto, 2003)

Stewart, Victoria, *Women's Autobiography: War and Trauma* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

---, *Narratives of Memory: British Writing of the 1940s* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

---, '"That Eternal 'Now'": Memory and Subjectivity in Elizabeth Bowen's *Seven Winters*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 53.2 (2007), 334-50

---, 'Violence and Representation in Elizabeth Bowen's Interwar Short Stories', *English*, 58.221 (2009), 139-59

Stonebridge, Lyndsey, 'Anxiety at a Time of Crisis', *History Workshop Journal*, 45 (1998), 171-82

---, 'The Writing of Anxiety in Henry Green's "Caught"', *Diacritics*, 28.4 (1998), 25-43

---, *The Writing of Anxiety: Imagining Wartime in Mid-Century British Culture*, Language, Discourse, Society, ed. by Stephen Heath, Colin MacCabe, and Denise Riley (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

---, 'Theories of Trauma', in MacKay, *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II*, pp. 194-206

Sturrock, June, 'Mumbo-Jumbo: The Haunted World of *The Little Girls*', in

Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 83-95

Suleiman, Susan Rubin, *Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006)

Sullivan, Walter, 'A Sense of Place: Elizabeth Bowen and the Landscape of the Heart', *Sewanee Review*, 84.1 (1976), 142-49

Summers-Bremner, Eluned, 'Heart(h) and Home: Elizabeth Bowen's Irishness', *Etudes Irlandaises*, 29.2 (2004), 135-50

---, 'Monumental City: Elizabeth Bowen and the Modern Unhomely', in *Modernism and Mourning*, ed. by Patricia Rae (Harrisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2006), pp. 260-69

---, 'Dead Letters and Living Things: Historical Ethics in *The House in Paris* and *The Death of the Heart*', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 61-82

Sword, Helen, *Ghostwriting Modernism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002)

Tatum, James, *The Mourner's Song: War and Remembrance from the Iliad to Vietnam* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003)

Taxidou, Olga, *Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004)

The Heat of the Day, dir. Christopher Morahan, WGBH Educational Foundation, 1991

The Last September, dir. Deborah Warner, Trimark, 1999

Thompson, Terry W., '"The Demon Lover": Elizabeth Bowen's "Unashamed Retelling" of "The Jolly Corner"', *South Carolina Review*, 39.1 (2006), 57-65

Thurschwell, Adam, 'Writing and Terror: Don DeLillo on the Task of Literature after 9/11', *Law and Literature*, 19.2 (2007), 277-302

Thurschwell, Pamela, 'Ferenczi's Dangerous Proximities: Telepathy, Psychosis, and the Real Event', *differences*, 11.1 (1999), 150-78

Tillinghast, Richard, 'Elizabeth Bowen: The House, the Hotel, and the Child', *New Criterion*, 13.4 (1994), 24-33

Toremans, Tom, 'Trauma: Theory – Reading (and) Literary Theory in the Wake of Trauma', *European Journal of English Studies*, 7.3 (2003), 333-51

Towheed, Shafquat, 'Territory, Space, Modernity: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Demon Lover and Other Stories* and Wartime London', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 113-31

Tracy, Robert, 'Undead, Unburied: Anglo-Ireland and the Predatory Past', *LIT*, 10.1 (1999), 13-33

Trezise, Thomas, 'Between History and Psychoanalysis: A Case Study in the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony', *History and Memory*, 20.1 (2008), 7-47

Trigg, Dylan, *The Aesthetics of Decay: Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason*, New Studies in Aesthetics 37, ed. by Robert Ginsberg (New York: Peter Lang, 2006)

---, 'The Place of Trauma: Memory, Hauntings, and the Temporality of Ruins', *Memory Studies*, 2.1 (2009), 87-101

Trotter, David, *Cooking with Mud: The Idea of Mess in Nineteenth-Century Art and Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Turim, Maureen, *Flashback in Film: Memory and History* (New York: Routledge,

1989)

Tylee, Claire M., *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writings, 1914-64* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1990)

van Alphen, Ernst, *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature, and Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998)

van Boheemen-Saaf, Christine, *Joyce, Derrida, Lacan, and the Trauma of History: Reading, Narrative and Postcolonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

van der Knaap, Ewout, ed., *Uncovering the Holocaust: The International Reception of 'Night and Fog'* (London: Wallflower, 2006)

van Duyn, Mona, 'Pattern and Pilgrimage: A Reading of *The Death of the Heart*', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 13-25

Vernadakis, Emmanuel, 'Christening Pagans: Onomastics and Plot in Elizabeth Bowen's "Daffodils", "Her Table Spread" and "Look At All Those Roses"', *Journal of the Short Story in English*, 34 (2000), 2-14

Vickroy, Laurie, *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002)

Vidler, Anthony, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992)

Wagner, Geoffrey, 'Elizabeth Bowen and the Artificial Novel', *Essays in Criticism*, 13.2 (1963), 155-63

Walker, Janet, *Trauma Cinema: Documenting Incest and the Holocaust* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005)

Wallace, Diana, 'Uncanny Stories: The Ghost Story as Female Gothic', *Gothic Studies*, 6.1 (2004), 57-69

Walsh, Keri, 'Elizabeth Bowen, Surrealist', *Eire-Ireland*, 42.3-4 (2007), 126-47

Walshe, Eibhear, 'Several Landscapes: Bowen and the Terrain of North Cork', *Estudios Irlandeses*, 0 (2005), 141-47

---, '"A Lout's Game": Espionage, Irishness, and Sexuality in *The Untouchable*', *Irish University Review*, (2006), 102-16

---, 'A Time for Hard Writers', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 95-109

---, 'A Sort of Lunatic Giant', in Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen*, pp. 150-61

---, ed., *Sex, Nation and Dissent in Irish Writing* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997)

---, *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered: The Farahy Addresses* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998)

---, *Elizabeth Bowen*, Visions and Revisions: Irish Writers in their Time, ed. by Stan Smith (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009)

Warner, Alan, *A Guide to Anglo-Irish Literature* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981)

Warren, Victoria, '"Experience Means Nothing Till It Repeats Itself": Elizabeth Bowen's *The Death of the Heart* and Jane Austen's *Emma*', *Modern Language Studies*, 29.1 (1999), 131-54

Watson, Barbara Bellow, 'Variations on an Enigma: Elizabeth Bowen's War Novel', in Bloom, *Elizabeth Bowen*, 81-101

Weekes, Ann Owens, *Irish Women Writers: An Uncharted Tradition* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1990)

Wells-Lassagne, Shannon, 'He Believed in Empire', *Irish Studies Review*, 15.4 (2007), 451-63

---, '"*She*-ward Bound": Elizabeth Bowen as a Sensationalist Writer', in Osborn, *New Critical Perspectives*, pp. 96-112

Wessels, Andries, 'Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of Love*: A "Cultural Analysis" of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in the Twentieth Century', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 21.1 (1995), 88-95

White, Sîan, 'Intimate Aesthetics in Elizabeth Bowen's Irish Novels', presented at *'A mixture of showing off and suspicion, nearly as bad as sex': Reading Elizabeth Bowen*, University of Sussex, 30 May 2009

Whitehead, Anne, *Trauma Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004)

---, *Memory*, The New Critical Idiom (Oxford: Routledge, 2009)

Whitworth, Michael H., *Einstein's Wake: Relativity, Metaphor, and Modernist Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Wightman, Beth, 'Geopolitics and the Sight of the Nation: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', *LIT*, 18.1 (2007), 37-64

Williams, Julia McElhattan, '"Fiction with the Texture of History": Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 41.2 (1995), 219-42

Wills, Clair, 'The Aesthetics of Irish Neutrality During the Second World War', *Boundary 2*, 31.1 (2004), 119-45

---, *That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland During the Second World War* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007)

---, '"Half Different": The Vanishing Irish in *A World of Love*', in Walshe,

Elizabeth Bowen, pp. 133-49

Winter, Jay, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare, ed. by Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Winter, Jay, and Emmanuel Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Wolff, Ellen M., *'An Anarchy in the Mind and in the Heart': Narrating Anglo-Ireland* (Harrisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2006)

Wolfreys, Julian, *Readings: Acts of Close Reading in Literary Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000)

Wood, Nancy, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1999)

Wood, Sarah, 'Beauty and Admiration in Learning: Louise Bourgeois and Paul De Man', *parallax*, 12.3 (2006), 51-64

Wright, Elizabeth, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reappraisal*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 1998)

Wyatt-Brown, Anne M., 'The Liberation of Mourning in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Little Girls* and *Eva Trout*', in *Aging and Gender in Literature: Studies in Creativity*, ed. by Anne M. Wyatt-Brown, and Janice Rossen, Feminist Issues: Practice, Politics, Theory (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), pp. 164-86

York, R.A., *The Rules of Time: Time and Rhythm in the Twentieth-Century Novel* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1999)

Zelizer, Barbie, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998)

Zwinger, Lynda, *Daughters, Fathers, and the Novel: The Sentimental Romance of Heterosexuality* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991)